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Restructuring in Work of Military Personnel
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[Article, published under the heading "Decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress in Life," by Army Gen D.T. Yazov: "Restructuring in the Work of Military Personnel"]

[Text] The restructuring being carried out in the Soviet Armed Forces is a portion of those profound revolutionary changes which are occurring throughout our nation under the party's leadership. The demands of the 27th Party Congress and the subsequent plenums of the CPSU Central Committee underlie the restructuring in the Army and Navy collectives.

In accord with the Constitution, the USSR Armed Forces have the mission of defending the victories of socialism, the peaceful labor of the Soviet people as well as the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the state. The military personnel plays an important role in carrying out this task.

From the very first days of the establishing of the Soviet Armed Forces, V.I. Lenin and the Communist Party gave great importance to the Army and Navy personnel. Upon the initiative of Vladimir Ilich, the questions of the training for military personnel were brought up at a session of the party Central Committee and the Council of People's Commissars [SNK]. Regardless of his heavy workload, Vladimir Ilich frequently met with commanders and political workers, he corresponded with them, he provided valuable advice and worked constantly so that the Army leadership had a profound mastery of the theory of Marxism, had high professional training and resolved the questions of military organizational development considering the concerns of the state.

The party's leader advised that the practical experience of the masses be valued and he sharply condemned boasting, bureaucracy and the abuse of power. Personnel should be recruited, V.I. Lenin taught, "a) from the viewpoint of conscientiousness, b) from the political position, c) from a knowledge of the job, d) administrative abilities...."(1)

These Leninist instructions have played a major role in the training and indoctrination of the military personnel. They are timely today.

Six months have passed since the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. The time has arrived for strict and critical assessments, intense reflections and the search for new ways to increase the work efficiency of the officers, generals and admirals and raise their actual contribution to strengthening the combat readiness of the Armed Forces as well as their responsibility for the practical results of training and indoctrinating the personnel.

The highest purpose of all activities for military personnel consists in unstinting service for the people and in a steady improvement in the combat readiness of the subunits, units and ships, the Armed Forces as a whole. In his report at the January Plenum, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Comrade M.S. Gorbachev, said: "The Central Committee counts firmly on the army personnel and the Soviet officer corps in carrying out the tasks of strengthening the state's defense capability and is confident that under the present complex international conditions the communists and all the Army and Navy personnel will act with the greatest responsibility and raise and improve the skill and combat readiness of all the services and combat arms."(2)

The opponents of disarmament and detente do not care at all for the military-strategic parity which exists between the USSR and the United States, between the Warsaw Pact states and the NATO countries. In order to dominate over the world and impose their will on other states and peoples, the reactionary circles of the West and primarily the United States are endeavoring by all means to gain a unilateral military supremacy, they are carrying out militaristic programs, they are unleashing local wars and conflicts in various regions of the world, in arbitrarily declaring them as spheres of their "vitally important interests." This is why at present, V.I. Lenin's warning that as long as imperialism exists, the possibility of the unleashing of wars will remain, has assumed particular importance.

In steadily carrying out a course of preserving peace as well as limiting and reducing the arms race, the CPSU and the Soviet government have shown constant concern for maintaining the defense might of the USSR on a level which securely guarantees the peaceful, creative labor of the Soviet people. They are also concerned for strengthening the military might of the Armed Forces, and indoctrinating all Soviet people, and primarily all the Army and Navy personnel, in a spirit of high revolutionary vigilance and constant readiness to defend the great victories of socialism.

The 27th CPSU Congress made an important contribution to developing Lenin's teachings about the defense of the socialist fatherland. The Congress materials provide convincing confirmation of our party's line of a peaceful, political settlement to the existing international problems and dependable support for the security of the Soviet state and peace throughout the world. These ideas

were reaffirmed at a meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact states held in May of this year. The military doctrine adopted at it is strictly defensive. This means that the socialist countries have no desire to have armed forces and weapons above what is essential for defense. The very heart of the doctrine expresses new political thinking which is being introduced with such tenacity in the system of international relations by the USSR and the other socialist commonwealth countries.

The Soviet Armed Forces are of such strength and on such a level which permit them in the event of an attack to deal a crushing rebuff to any aggressor. The Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress emphasizes: "...The Soviet Union does not claim greater security but it will also not accept less."(3)

The new version of the CPSU Program adopted by the congress has formulated the most important demands for the Armed Forces, for the Army and Navy communists, and for all military personnel under the conditions of a decisive struggle for peace and for accelerating the socioeconomic development of our country.

Acceleration and restructuring are processes encompassing all aspects of the activities of the party, the state, the society and each Soviet man. These also apply completely to the Armed Forces because the nation's successes in the economic, social and cultural spheres and in the development of science and technology in a decisive manner influence the equipping of the Army and Navy with modern weapons, their manning with thoroughly trained military personnel, with educated, spiritually and physically healthy men. In this context, greater importance is assumed by the questions of intensifying the training and indoctrinal process, giving a greater practical focus to all the training of the troops and naval forces as well as the ubiquitous maintaining of firm prescribed order and strong military discipline.

The officer personnel plays a special role in successfully carrying out these responsible tasks. Their political maturity, professional preparedness and competence to a decisive degree determine the quality of the training and educational process, the combat readiness of the subunits, units and ships and which is expressed in the capacity at any moment to successfully carry out the set tasks.

Combat readiness at present is the main indicator for the qualitative state of the troops and naval forces. In this is realized the powerful combat potential of the Soviet Armed Forces which is a strong alloy of military skill and high technical equipping, ideological steadfastness, organization and discipline of the personnel and their loyalty to patriotic and international duty. The results of the diverse activities of the military personnel in the area of troop leadership are focused precisely in combat readiness.

The demands on combat readiness are constantly growing and it cannot be imagined as something set once and for all. Modern weapons with their enormous destructive power, speed and high precision are making significant changes in the notion of the ability of the troops and naval forces to conduct successful combat operations. This must be profoundly realized by each officer and he must direct his own energy as well as the spiritual and physical forces of subordinates toward excellent mastery of modern weapons and equipment in a short period of time, improving field, air and sea skills, and the teamwork of the subunits, units and ships, at indoctrinating all the personnel in high moral-political and combat qualities, at raising vigilance and strengthening discipline, that is, at what precisely comprises readiness for combat.

The greatest successes here are achieved where the commanders show a creative approach to organizing the combat training exercises and when in the exercises they create a situation close to actual combat. Under present-day conditions, when the troops are equipped predominantly with collective types of weapons, coordinating the actions of many men, their constant attentiveness and unfailing efficiency and strong conscious discipline are of special importance. This is why the will of the solcely-responsible commander, his firmness and efficiency, his organizational abilities and personal example and ability to lead the men to carry out specific tasks now play a very important role.

Under the conditions of restructuring, primary importance has been assumed by such qualities of the military personnel as a profound knowledge and precise execution of their official duties, unconditional justness, self-criticalness in assessing the state of affairs, closeness to the men, as well as the ability to organize and unite them for achieving high end results.

Certainly, these qualities are not developed all at once. People are not born soldiers, let alone commanders. They become so in the process of intense daily work, by acquiring political and professional military knowledge, by the experience of training and indoctrinating subordinates under the unswerving attention of senior commanders and chiefs, party and Komsomol organizations. This process starts in military schools which should not only provide the military personnel with firm theoretical knowledge and inculcate practical skills, but also instill in them a pride for the officer's profession and a desire for self-improvement and zealous service.

At the present stage it is essential first of all to bring about an intensification of the training process, a strengthening of its ties with the practical needs of the troops and the naval forces and a stronger effectiveness from the ideological-political, military and moral indoctrination of the students and officer candidates.

Due to the constant concern of the CPSU and the Soviet government, our Armed Forces possess strong personnel potential. Year after year there has been an ongoing improvement in the qualitative characteristics of the military personnel. The level of their professional training is constantly growing. While in 1952, prior to the introduction of the new system of officer personnel training, the Army and Navy had a little more than 40 percent of the officers with a higher military and specialized military education, in 1986, their number was now around 80 percent. Each year thousands of officers are awarded high governmental decorations for outstanding indicators in combat and political training, for mastering new equipment and weapons and for carrying out their international duty.

At the same time, it must be directly said that many shortcomings in personnel work which were indicated at the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee also exist in the Armed Forces. Recent events involving the violation of the air space of the Soviet Union show serious flaws in the organizing of alert duty, and an absence of proper vigilance and strict military discipline and high responsibility for carrying out the set tasks.

The generals, admirals and officers have still not completely grasped the essence of the restructuring, they have not found their role and place in it and have not realized that it must be begun precisely with oneself. Instead of organizing service and combat training exactingly and with a knowledge of the job and instilling prescribed order, they permit weaknesses and oversimplification in the training of the personnel and themselves are not an example in observing military discipline or the standards of socialist morality and in increasing their professional level and ideological tempering.

In determining personnel policy under the conditions of the restructuring, the party teaches us not only to keep in mind the new vast tasks but also to draw correct conclusions and lessons from the past. The first lesson is the necessity of promptly resolving the arising personnel questions and ensure succession in leadership and a constant influx of fresh forces.

Combat training in the Army and Navy with each passing year is enriched with new content. The well-known principle of teaching the troops what is required in a war is being steadily implemented. The pace of the conducted exercises and their intensity have risen significantly. Involved and often unusual conditions in a dynamically changing situation abounding frequently with critical situations create additional physical and psychological stresses for the officers. And if one considers that in a real combat situation these stresses will rise significantly, it becomes apparent that even now in the main command-headquarters and political positions there should be persons who excel not only in a mastery of organizing and conducting combat but also with excellent health and good physical conditioning.

Violating the natural process of replacing military personnel, particularly on the senior level, leads to a weakening of their role and impact on carrying out the tasks confronting the Army and Navy personnel. For the same reason a significant number of young officers who are the commanders of platoons, companies, battalions and equal subunits, hold their positions for 5 years and more and as a result of this they at times loose sight of the future and any interest in service.

Quite understandably we must improve the age profile of the officer personnel and renew the leadership reasonably, seeking an optimum combination of young and experienced personnel in the main command-staff and political positions. In and of itself youth not backed up by the practical results of labor cannot serve as a dependable pass to a superior position. The criterion for all promotions and moves remains one, as was emphasized at the 27th CPSU Congress, that is, the political, moral and professional qualities, the capabilities and actual accomplishments of the worker and his attitude toward others and toward the restructuring. Here it is also important to strictly carry out the requirements of the USSR Law Governing Universal Military Service and the regulations for military service by officer personnel of the USSR Armed Forces in terms of the prompt discharging of officer personnel who have reached maximum age for active military service.

The second lesson from previous experience is to increase the Marxist-Leninist and military-professional training and the ideological and moral conditioning of the officer personnel in every possible way and see to it that the style and methods of their work meet the demands of the times and the conditions of the restructuring. Inherent to each officer, general and admiral should be a profound ideological conviction and the highest political and moral responsibility for the fate of the nation and for the condition of military readiness in the subunits, units and ships.

The personnel of the Soviet Armed Forces must be an example of ideological steadfastness, unwavering observance of party, state and military discipline, loyalty to their word, orderliness, incorruptibility, humility and implacability against any deviations from the standards of socialist morality. Otherwise, this is fraught with the most serious consequences in their activities and in the life of the troop collectives.

High demands are presently placed upon the professional training of the military personnel. In carrying out the tasks of further increasing combat readiness, all officers, generals and admirals should constantly improve their knowledge, their weapons, technical, operational-tactical and special skills, and master the advanced procedures and methods of work in the subunit, unit and on the ships, that is, where high combat skills, strong discipline and constant readiness for combat are forged.

The third lesson requires that the commanders and superiors, the officers of the staffs and political bodies do not replace vital, creative work with the men, true concern for their political, spiritual and professional growth with excessive administrative rules, hurried and at times rash conclusions about their service and public activities or by unjustified decisions concerning their further career. It is essential not only to achieve personnel stability but also fight against its absolutization which, in essence, would mean personnel stagnation. We must not permit personnel shuffling or unsound shifts of the officers, generals and admirals. We must strictly observe the principle of social justice in resolving all personnel questions.

The errors and shortcomings in personnel work basically derive from a poor knowledge of the men and of their political, professional and moral qualities. This is why it is essential to constantly improve the ways and methods of studying, recruiting and placing the personnel, to rely more widely in this work on the troop and fleet party organizations and to take public opinion into greater account. The military councils, the commanders, the staffs, the political and personnel bodies should seek out and find officers who are truly enterprising, honest, energetic and demanding and who are capable of clearly carrying out the tasks of the restructuring and achieving high results in training the personnel and in strengthening discipline, organization and order. Such officers must be carefully fostered, boldly promoted to responsible positions and given greater trust.

At the same time, we should not and cannot be just "bystanders" on the issue of the interests of the party, the state and Armed Forces. True concern for the personnel has nothing in common with indifference, all-forgivingness, charity and buttering up. A greater responsibility for the assigned job, stronger discipline on the part of officer personnel and the establishing of a situation of exactingness and mutual demandingness in the Army and Navy environment—this is the real way for increasing the effective work of the military personnel.

Under present-day conditions, special importance is being assumed by the struggle for the pure and honest image of the Soviet officer as a dependable proponent of party policy in the Armed Forces. In order to progress we must without hesitation get rid of all sorts of accommodators, careerists, and opportunists, of those who compromise the Soviet officer corps by money-grubbing, alcoholism and moral unscrupulousness. Today the party says a decisive "no" to any manifestations of favoritism or nepotism. The party says "no" to workers who are sluggish, indifferent, incompetent, who have stopped growing, and particularly to the yes-men and windbags and to the entrenched bureaucrats who endeavor to "sit out" the difficult times for them and impede the cause of restructuring. This is the will of the party and it is the law for us!

Finally, one other demand stemming from the decisions of the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee. This is to more widely employ in the struggle against negative phenomena in the activities of military personnel the democratic principles such as criticism, self-criticism, glasnost, reliance on the masses, and improve the forms and methods of supervision over the work of the personnel on all levels.

We would particularly like to take up the relationships of one-man leadership and democracy.

The person of the solely responsible commander brings together power and responsibility. The party and the people have entrusted the officers with not only the indoctrination and training of the men but also with an honorary and highly responsible right of leading them into battle if so required. The solely responsible commanders have been granted full executive power and bear personal responsibility to the communist party and the Soviet government for all aspects of the life and activities of the troops and naval forces.

The necessity of one-man command stems from the requirements of military affairs and the developmental patterns of the military organization in a socialist state. The entire glorious combat record of the Soviet Armed Forces and their world historical victories in the wars to defend the socialist fatherland irrefutably show the permanent significance of one-man command. This best ensures firmness and flexibility in troop control, precise organization and discipline, high personal responsibility of the command personnel for the training and indoctrination of the men, and the combat readiness of the troops and naval forces. But this does not mean that the commander should resolve everything and do everything himself, that is, individually. The good commander or superior is the one who seeks advice from subordinates and listens to their opinions. Turning to the collective for advice does not reduce but enhances the authority of the solely-responsible leader.

One-man leadership in the Soviet Armed Forces is carried out on a party basis. This means that each leader, regardless of the position he holds, is obliged to unswervingly carry out CPSU policy. He should in every possible way support the activeness and creative initiative of the communists, he should promptly set tasks for them, he should approach each undertaking from party positions, he should personally participate in party political work and unswervingly carry out party decisions. At party meetings the communists have the right to criticize any member or candidate member of the party regardless of the position held by them. No criticism is permitted of the orders and instructions of commanders and superiors, but this is not the case for their personal qualities, shortcomings, style and methods of work.

The interests of strengthening one-man command in the Soviet Armed Forces require a further strengthening of work in the area of the political, military and moral

indoctrination of military personnel. It is particularly important to instill in our command personnel political criteria in self-assessments, judgments of their position, as well as party, service and social duty. Precisely political maturity leaves no room for petty feelings and motives and serves as a dependable basis for increasing work efficiency and for overcoming inertia, indifference to others, conceit and alienation from the personnel.

To shape the awareness of military personnel in a spirit of the restructuring means to teach them to live and act under the conditions of broadening democracy. Here it is a question not merely of the "becoming accustomed" to glasnost, criticism and self-criticism, but primarily of changes in the psychology and thinking of each, from the private to the marshal, and of a more respectful and attentive and at the same time demanding attitude toward others.

In this context it is not superfluous to recall the words of V.I. Lenin: "It is essential to learn to bring together the turbulent democracy of the workers which roils like the spring flood with iron discipline during labor and with unfailing obedience, to the will of one individual, the Soviet leader, during labor."(4)

True democracy does not exist outside the law or above the law. In the Army and Navy this is achieved primarily by instituting strict prescribed relations between the servicemen, the superiors and subordinates, the senior and the junior and those equal in position and military rank.

These relations are caused by the very nature of the Soviet Armed Forces and by their functional purpose and developmental experience. They are reinforced in legislation. At the same time, in the units and on the ships there still are instances of incorrect, improper relations between the servicemen of differing periods of service, nationalities and even between superiors and subordinates. These cases are based not on a class antagonism. They are caused not only by flaws in the moral qualities of individual servicemen, but also by shortcomings in the organization of training, service, routine and leisure of the servicemen in strict accord with the prescribed requirements, by the inability and at times the reticence of a portion of the officers to conduct indoctrinational work with subordinates in an apt and consistent manner, relying on the party and Komsomol organizations and employing the entire weight of power, the strength of the law and the authority of public opinion in combating negative phenomena.

The certification of the officer personnel carried out in 1986 showed that certain officers have little knowledge of their official duties, the provisions of the general troop regulations and other documents governing relations in the troop collectives and for this reason do not carry them out with sufficient clarity and consistency. Moreover, a certain portion of the officer personnel is removed from the men, closing themselves off in highly

specialized, technical and administrative problems and not being concerned for establishing a high moral atmosphere, a situation of collectivism, mutual respect and strict prescribed exactingness in the troop collectives.

The party teaches us to approach an assessment of such phenomena primarily from a political viewpoint. When the issue arises of shortcomings in combat and political training or of instances of improper relationships, inevitably the question must be posed of what has been done to overcome these by the specific officials, that is, by the commanders, political workers, the party and Komsomol activists. We cannot look on with indifference as an incompetent, coarse or heartless man who is unable and does not wish to listen to others, to rely on the help of the party organization and organize the work of his subordinates, spoils the cause of instructing and indoctrinating the personnel and actually destroys the troop collective by his actions and conduct.

Further democratization in the work with the military personnel presupposes a strengthening of responsibility on the part of the senior chiefs, the political bodies and party organizations for promoting to leading positions ideologically mature, highly skilled and morally pure officers, generals and admirals.

In speaking about better work with the leading personnel, particular attention must be paid to the recruitment, placement, training and indoctrination of the commanders of regiments, brigades and ships of the first rank. With a general high qualitative description of this personnel, it is completely intolerable when there is a situation where certain individuals commit major mistakes in work, they do not struggle with sufficient tenacity and effectiveness to increase the combat readiness of the assigned units and ships, for strengthening military discipline and order, they show a lack of attention toward subordinates, and endeavor to conceal shortcomings and embellish the true state of affairs. Such instances must be given a principled party evaluation and eradicated.

Many mistakes in the work of officers on the regimental level can be explained by a lack of concreteness, consistency and a systematic, individual approach to their training and indoctrination. Certain senior chiefs assume that there is no need to train and indoctrinate the officer appointed to the position of regimental commander. They abuse exactingness and so generously impose reprimands that the regiment's new commander during the years collects as many as he would during all of his service. I have repeatedly encountered such instances. It is easy to imagine how such a regimental commander indoctrinates his subordinates. For example, in one of the units, more than 80 percent of the officers had received reprimands. In such an instance even a strong-charactered man would begin to doubt his forces and capabilities and become used to shortcomings.

Another extreme in the work with newly appointed commanders of regiments, brigades and ships of the first rank is excessive interference in carrying out difficult tasks, particularly in exercises, in the course of inspections and in the presence of senior chiefs. In having a poor knowledge of the capabilities of the man and without trusting them, individual generals and officers from the superior staffs in essence take over from the immediate chiefs and they coach the personnel in firing, driving and so forth, endeavoring at least for a short time to depict their training as being higher than it actually is. Such sham activity brings nothing but harm. It gives rise to a lack of responsibility, a free-ride mentality and the illusion of well-being and dampens the initiative of the inferior command personnel.

"There can be no restructuring or no turning point if each communist, particularly the leader, does not understand the enormous importance of practical actions...,"(5) pointed out the Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress. To act energetically, boldly, creatively and competently was how the January Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee defined and concretized the main task of the moment. The most important area of work in carrying out the party decisions is a profound and complete study by the military personnel of the sphere of their daily activity, that is, directly in the units and formations, in working through difficult combat training tasks and in resolving the questions of a further strengthening of military discipline.

The attitude toward restructuring and real actions to implement it are the decisive criterion for evaluating all military personnel. Here also it is essential to consider other fundamental demands such as: implacability toward shortcomings, routine, indifference and passivity; support for all that is advanced and progressive, competence and professionalism, honesty, integrity, humility, organization and efficiency.

We would particularly like to take up the necessity of indoctrinating in our military personnel such a trait as closeness to others as this largely determines the Leninist style of work. For us an invaluable legacy which has assumed particular timeliness in our days is the idea of V.I. Lenin on the need to live in the midst of the masses, to listen

to them, to capture their moods and reflect their aspirations in practical activities.

Life again and again has convinced us that closeness to the people is a most important indicator of the party and professional maturity of the commander, the political worker and each officer and an obligatory condition for increasing the effectiveness of work in the area of improving combat readiness and strengthening discipline. Certainly combat readiness ultimately depends not only upon the might and state of the weapons and the

professional training of the personnel but also upon whether the men are fed promptly, are supplied with everything necessary and upon their mood.

We must again draw attention to one of the requirements of the Internal Service Regulations of the USSR Armed Forces, that is, to thoroughly study the personnel by coming into contact with them both in service and in everyday life. The experienced indoctrinator will always find an opportunity to visit the officer billets and the apartment of a young family, to meet with the activists of the women's council and take an interest in organizing the leisure time of the officers and members of their families.

Along with the party organizations, the Army and Navy personnel bodies should become true centers for restructuring all personnel work. Greater effectiveness of their work to a decisive degree depends upon a clear understanding and profound awareness of the restructuring tasks set by the party, upon strengthening ties with the life of the troop collectives, concentrating efforts on the main areas in the struggle to increase the combat readiness of the troops and naval forces and strengthening discipline of the personnel.

Important tasks confront the commanders, the political and personnel bodies in carrying out the results of the officer corps certification. First of all, this involves eliminating the shortcomings disclosed in the activities of the military personnel, strengthening their ideological-political, military and moral indoctrination, realizing in actuality the principle of social justice in resolving personnel questions and establishing a trained reserve of candidates for promotion and further education.

In the formations, troop units, facilities and military schools it is essential to have permanent certification commissions which, in addition to reviewing the certifications, would be entrusted with a preliminary review of candidates for promotion, further education, for awarding military ranks and presenting USSR state decorations as well as other questions related to the service of the officers and warrant officers ["praporshchik" and "michman"].

Like all the Soviet people, the personnel of the USSR Armed Forces has serious work to do in achieving a major turning in their activities. The military personnel should see their prime task in achieving a decisive rise in the level of combat training and discipline in the Armed Forces, providing skilled troop command and ensuring their constant capacity to thwart any encroachments on the sovereignty of the Soviet state.

For more than 40 years the Soviet people have lived under peacetime conditions, but during all these years the USSR and its allies were forced to be concerned with providing a dependable defense for the victories of

socialism. The necessity of such a defense stems from the lessons of the Great Patriotic War and World War II as well as from the present situation in the world.

United closely around the Leninist party and dedicated to their people, the officers, generals and admirals are improving their professional skills and are revising their work in a spirit of the demands of the times. This is the guarantee for successfully carrying out the tasks confronting the Soviet Armed Forces and the main condition for properly greeting the 70th anniversary of Great October.

Footnotes

1. V.I. Lenin, PSS [Complete Collected Works], Vol 53, p 97.

2. "Materialy Plenuma Tsentralnogo Komiteta KPSS, 27-28 yanvarya 1987 goda" [Materials of the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee, 27-28 January 1987], Moscow, Politizdat, 1987, pp 62-63.

3. "Materialy XXVII sъezda KPSS" [Materials of the 27th CPSU Congress], Moscow, Politizdat, 1986, p 67.

4. V.I. Lenin, PSS, Vol 36, p 203.

5. "Materialy XXVII sъезда KPSS," p 83.

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Generalization, Employment of Combat Experience in First Period of Great Patriotic War
18010005b Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL in Russian No 7, Jul 87 (signed to press 23 Jun 87) pp 14-20

[Article, published under the heading "Soviet Military Art," by Col S.A. Gladyshev, candidate of military sciences: "Generalization and Employment of Combat Experience in First Period of the Great Patriotic War"]

[Text] The Great Patriotic War, as is known, started under disadvantageous conditions for the Soviet Union. Our nation was the victim of a surprise attack by a multimillion-strong, fully mobilized and well armed German Army which had almost 2 years of fighting experience. This largely predetermined the unsuccessful outcome for the Soviet Army of the initial period of the war and certain subsequent operations. The reasons for these failures are the subject of a special discussion. Of important significance among them was the absence of combat experience in our troops.

During the prewar period in the Armed Forces, work was being done to study and use combat experience. A great deal of attention had been paid, for example, to generalizing the experience of the Civil War and then the

fighting at Lake Khasan and the Khalkhin-Gol River. After the Soviet-Finnish War of 1939-1940, a start was made on generalizing its experience, and in particular the breakthrough of a strongly fortified enemy defense and the improvement on this basis of weapons and military equipment, as well as the organizational structure of the troops. However, the staffs and troops had not paid proper attention to studying the combat experience of the commenced World War II. Due to underestimating the importance of the initial period of the war for the subsequent course of the fighting, the attention of the military personnel was not focused on the importance of the surprise factor in the attack and the related necessity of high mobilizational and combat readiness of the troops to repel the aggressor's strikes. Due to the incorrect conclusion that the Soviet troops would employ defensive actions only on an operational-tactical scale, many important questions concerning the organization and conduct of a strategic defensive, retreat and fighting in an encirclement and the going over to a counteroffensive had been poorly worked out and these had to be resolved in the course of the commenced war.(1)

The Communist Party and the Soviet government, in anticipating an inevitable military clash with Nazi Germany, had initiated effective measures to improve the technical equipping of the Armed Forces and to better their organization and training. Intense training was going on in the troops and staffs to master the new weapons and equipment as well as the methods of their employment. However, even the best peacetime combat and operational training could not completely replace real combat experience. Because of this, with the outbreak of war, the task of studying and generalizing combat experience in the aim of improving the art of preparing and conducting combat operations and the skillful employment of forces on the battlefield became one of the main ones.

Even during the first days of the war, Headquarters Supreme High Command [Hq SHC] and the General Staff, regardless of the heavy workload due to the difficult situation on the fronts, initiated a number of organizational measures aimed at accumulating, studying and generalizing combat experience and promptly issuing this to the troops. In mid-July 1941, groups of generals and officers were sent into the operational army with the aim of studying the combat methods, employment of the combat arms as well as enemy tactics.(2) Simultaneously, the General Staff requested that the chiefs of staff of the high commands of the strategic sectors, the fronts and armies submit to it quickly all materials reflecting the combat experience of our troops and the new combat procedures of the enemy troops, conclusions and proposals on the organization, weapons and combat employment of the units and formations, on preparing and conducting battles and operations, on troop command and their complete support.(3) The subsequent Orders of the USSR NKO [People's Commissar of Defense] of 25 April 1942 introduced an

ordered system of bodies for direct work on generalizing and utilizing the war's experience from the General Staff down to the army staffs.(4)

This work assumed a more concrete direction with the publishing of the Directive of the General Staff of 9 November 1942. This directive and the appended "Instructions on the Generalization and Employment of the War's Experience" particularly emphasized the need for a thorough study of the battles, engagements and operations, the disclosure of trends and patterns in the development of military art and on this basis the elaboration of practical recommendations for the troops. Responsibility of officials was established for generalizing and disseminating combat experience. Instructions were provided on the forms and methods of this work as well as the planning and reporting procedures.(5)

In accord with the instructions of Hq SHC and the General Staff and often spontaneously in the troops of the operational army, literally from the first days of the war, active work was initiated to study, generalize and employ combat experience. This can be traced rather well from the example of the Western Front.

The troops of the front at the start of the war had to conduct heavy defensive battles, holding up the rapidly advancing enemy. The enemy's offensive tactics consisted chiefly in the massed employment of tanks on narrow sectors of the front with air support. Moreover, they also extensively employed mobile forward detachments, the dropping of airborne forces and diversionary groups in the rear of our troops and the infiltrating of submachine gunners to create panic and the appearance of encirclement. The enemy endeavored, by employing surprise, to cause confusion in our troops and achieve success before effective resistance could be organized.

Proceeding from an analysis of the nature of enemy operations, on 15 July 1941, that is, 3 weeks after the start of hostilities, a directive was published from the Commander of the Western Front, MSU S.K. Timoshenko, and this disclosed omissions in the organization of our defenses. These were the insufficient coordination of the fire plan with the man-made obstacles and impediments, in the premature response of defending troops to feints by the enemy forward detachments as a consequence of which the fire plan was given away. In a number of instances there was poor maneuvering of weapons with a significant number being held in reserve in the interior of the defenses. The directive demanded that the commanders establish a strong antitank defense on the most important routes of advance of the enemy panzer and motorized formations. Here particular attention was given to the effective employment of not only the 45-mm antitank cannons but also the larger caliber artillery, including the artillery of the divisional second echelons and the army reserves as well as antiaircraft artillery. Here it was recommended that the artillery firing positions be selected considering the possibility of firing at the enemy tanks with direct laying at a range of

1,000-1,500 m. The directive also demanded that the necessary measures be taken to protect the artillery materiel and the artillery crews from enemy fire.(6)

In all the formations and units demonstration firing was held using examples of combat equipment captured from the enemy. Thus, in August 1941, upon assignment of the Western Front Military Council, in one of the units they conducted firing from 45-mm cannons and antitank rifles. The final data of these firings and practical advice were set out in an order of the front's commander and this was studied by all the personnel.(7)

At the same time the front's staff generalized the experience of the effective employment of man-made obstacles in combating enemy tanks. In the directive issued by it, particular attention was paid to the necessity of placing obstacles along the highways and main secondary roads and covering these with antitank weapons. In the regiments and battalions, for destroying enemy tanks, they recommended organizing antitank teams equipped with antitank grenades, Molotov cocktails and explosive charges.(8)

Further generalization and dissemination of experience in combating enemy tanks were reflected in the order of the Western Front Staff issued in October 1941. This required that in each rifle regiment they organize one antitank detachment and in a rifle division, two of these and three in an army. The necessity was indicated of ensuring their high mobility so that they could operate with surprise, destroy the enemy tanks and cut them off from the motorized infantry and motorcyclists.(9)

The tendency of the enemy mobile units to break through on the boundaries of our troops very acutely posed the question of a dependable cover for these areas. For this the front's staff demanded that the commanders and staffs employ all types of weapons and the building of obstacles, establish responsibility for the boundaries between the formations, units and subunits as well as organize cooperation.(10)

Important significance was given to generalizing the experience of preparing and conducting nighttime combat as a result of this surprise and high effectiveness of the strikes against the enemy were achieved. On 15 August 1941, the front's commander approved the "Instructions on Organizing and Actions of Nighttime Assault Detachments" compiled considering the combat experience of the troops. It was recommended that the detachments be organized in regiments (divisions), including in them one or two companies armed with automatic weapons and grenades as well as Molotov cocktails. They were to be headed by battle-tested, bold, enterprising and physically strong commanders. The instructions also gave recommendations on the procedure of actions for these detachments.(11)

It should be pointed out that these instructions were the further development of recommendations which had been issued to the troops by Hq SHC at the very outset of the war. The recommendations had proposed widely employing surprise night attacks against the enemy panzer and motorized units which had halted in population points and along roads.

One of the instructive examples of nighttime combat was the offensive by formations and units from the 29th Army (commander, Lt Gen I.I. Masiennikov, chief of staff Maj Gen V.M. Sharapov) in the course of the Smolensk Engagement in August 1941. The offensive was organized considering the recommendations and demands of the above-indicated instructions and this largely contributed to the success. During the night of 17 August, the army's units and formations crossed the Western Dvina to the southeast of Velikiye Luki and with a surprise attack routed the enemy battle outposts and, in carrying out the set mission, during the night advanced successfully, destroying the enemy in the strongpoints. The enemy units retreated in panic.(13)

Subsequently, the experience of night combat was steadily acquired and issued by the front's command and staff to the troops. In particular, on 18 November 1941, the Order of the Commander of the Western Front, Army Gen G.K. Zhukov, drew attention to the effectiveness of surprise night attacks against the enemy as carried out by the units of the 33d Army of Lt Gen M.G. Yefremov. Later, in December 1941, a directive from the Western Front Military Council was issued with the demand to intensify nighttime combat.(14)

The staffs and troops of the Western Front carried out extensive work in studying and generalizing the experience of the counteroffensive which commenced at the beginning of December 1941 and later the general offensive by the Soviet troops. A characteristic feature in enemy tactics was the fact that its defenses had a focal nature and were based on a system of strongpoints. The strongpoints prepared for all-round defense, had coordinated fire with one another and were a major obstacle for our advancing troops. This particular feature of the enemy defenses had to be considered in organizing and carrying out the breakthrough, particularly under the conditions of a winter with heavy snow. For this reason the Western Front Military Council at the beginning of December 1941 demanded that in breaching the enemy defenses efforts be focused on narrow sectors of the front, employing for this the main bulk of the artillery and other weapons, the rapid outflanking of the enemy strongpoints and their capture by attack from the flank and rear. It was proposed that blockading and storm groups be organized for capturing the enemy strongpoints. Proceeding from the acquired experience, it was strongly recommended that extended battles with the enemy be avoided and outflankings and envelopments more widely employed.(15)

The experience of organizing the pursuit of the retreating enemy was studied and generalized with particular care. The Directive of the Western Front Military Council "On Eliminating Shortcomings in the Practice of Pursuing the Enemy by the Western Front" emphasized that certain units, instead of advancing rapidly, engaged in extended fighting against the enemy and force it back from the front by a frontal offensive. The directive prohibited frontal combat against the covering units and demanded that small screens be left against the rear guards and fortified positions of the enemy while the main forces would rapidly outflank them, coming out on the enemy escape routes. It was also recommended that assault groups and pursuit detachments be organized. The directive paid great attention to the conducting of active reconnaissance, particularly on the flanks, to dependable security for the pursuing troops, to the prompt reinforcing of captured lines and to quick organization of antitank defenses on the sectors of possible enemy counterattacks.

The directive issued several days later by the front's commander again included the demand that the head echelons of the pursuing troops outflank enemy centers of resistance, entrusting their destruction to following echelons. The directive also demanded the clearer organization of cooperation on the boundaries with adjacent units and the providing of help to one another regardless of the configuration of the demarcation lines.(16)

Great attention was given to studying, generalizing and introducing into the troops the experience of organizing command of the field forces, formations and units. The Directive of the Western Front Commander issued at the beginning of January 1942 pointed out that there had been substantial shortcomings in organizing troop command. In particular, in the 5th and 16th Armies, army command posts had not been established and the armies commanded the advancing forces from staffs that were 18-25 km away from the troops. Reconnaissance before the offensive was not always carried out. The directive demanded that the commanders of the formations, units and subunits personally organize combat, conduct reconnaissance in the field and constantly monitor the situation. It was recommended that on the offensive the army command posts be located not more than 10-12 km from the forward edge and those of the divisions and brigades some 3-4 km.(17)

Combat practice showed that certain commanders often without reason left the command posts and were for a long time in subordinate units, thereby being isolated from troop leadership. In this context the front's commander decisively demanded that subordinate commanders spend more time at the command posts and constantly maintain contact with the troops and the superior staff.(18)

Thus, even at the start of the war the Western Front had initiated energetic work to study and generalize combat experience. This was organized by the commander, the

chief of staff, the commanders of the combat arms and the chiefs of services of the front as well as the commanders and staffs of the field forces (formations). Having detected positive or negative features in the actions of the troops, the front's commander, as a rule, without delay pointed these out to subordinate commanders. When necessary the front's staff on the basis of the commander's instructions, worked out the appropriate directives (orders, instructions) and effectively issued them to the troops. In addition to the chief of staff, the preparation of these documents involved the chief of the operations directorate (section), the commanders of the combat arms and the chiefs of the services as well as officers involved in studying and generalizing combat experience.

The significant scope of the work done can be seen from the fact that in 1942 alone, on the basis of generalizing combat experience, 82 different documents (directives, orders and instructions) were prepared and issued to the troops of the front and these contained provisions on the most effective methods of preparing and conducting combat as well as the employment of the combat arms and weapons.(19)

It should be pointed out that at first in the generalizing of combat experience there was an incorrect trend consisting in the predominance of mere descriptiveness of the conducted operations and combat. Subsequently, this shortcoming was eliminated. Basic attention began to be paid to elaborating specific proposals and recommendations for the troops in the process of preparing and conducting combat.

Proper attention was paid to careful planning of the work involved in studying, generalizing and employing combat experience and this was carried out considering the forthcoming troop operations. In line with this, lone-range plans and plans for studying specific operations were worked out at the front staff and the army staffs in addition to the monthly plans.

Also improved were the methods of actually employing the conclusions from the war's experience and effectively issuing them to the command personnel, the staffs and the troops. At the beginning this was done by issuing directives, orders and instructions while subsequently the front staff and the army staffs issued collections, operational and tactical reviews and compendiums, informational leaflets, memoranda and so forth. In time it became a practice to conduct exercises with the command personnel to analyze the conducted operations and battles.

This work gained even greater effectiveness and organizational completeness after the issuing of the General Staff Directive of 9 November 1942 and the "Instructions on Generalizing and Employing the War's Experience." In the aims of elaborating a unified method for

the staffs to carry out further work in studying, generalizing and utilizing combat experience, a front instructional conference was held at the beginning of February 1943.(20) This was attended by the senior assistant chiefs of the operations sections involved in studying the war's experience from the army and front staffs, officers from the directorates and sections of the combat arms and services working on the study of combat experience as well as other generals and officers. At the conference there was a professional exchange of opinions on the work results in 1941-1942, proposals were made and tasks set for the forthcoming period. The combat experience of the Western Front was considered in preparing a number of very important guiding documents, for example, the Directive Letter of Hq SHC of 10 January 1942 concerning the organization of the breakthrough of enemy defensive lines, the artillery offensive and certain others. Many provisions of the directive of the Western Front issued in May 1942 on the conduct of offensive and defensive battles were reflected in the Infantry Field Manual and Regulation on Staff Field Service worked out in 1942, in the draft Field Manual which was being worked out, in the orders of the USSR NKO No. 306 of 8 October 1942 and No. 325 of 16 October 1942, as well as the procedural teaching aids on troop combat training. For example, the Instructions on the Employment of Trenches in a Defensive Line worked out considering combat experience and approved on 13 October 1942 by the commander of the Western Front was then approved by the engineer committee under the Chief of the Soviet Army Engineer Troops and recommended for practical employment on other fronts.(21)

The political bodies took an active part in mobilizing the personnel to assimilate and generalize combat experience. For example, in the summer of 1941, when the combating of enemy tanks had assumed particular importance, the political bodies and party organizations took the necessary measures so that the personnel had a good knowledge of the strong and weak points of the German tanks. This also contributed to the effective use of our antitank weapons. The corresponding instructions were issued and the newspapers of the formations and field forces published advice to the men on methods for destroying enemy tanks.

The units constantly generalized and disseminated the experience of the best enemy tank killers. In August 1941, the Political Directorate of the Western Front generalized the experience of employing Molotov cocktails against enemy tanks in the 100th Rifle Division and issued instructions to all political bodies and party organizations to widely disseminate the experience in the troops and help the commanders introduce this into practice.(22)

The given examples show that due to the concrete and effective activities of the command, the staffs and the political bodies in the very difficult situation of the first period of the Great Patriotic War, the Western Front initiated active work to master combat experience. This

provided the opportunity to employ new forms and methods of combat which to the highest degree conformed to the situation and made it possible to successfully carry out the set tasks.

The reviewed questions of organizing the study, generalization and dissemination of combat experience are of important significance today. History teaches that the changes in the theory and practice of military affairs are of a very dynamic nature. For this reason, a mastery of the effective forms and methods of generalizing and employing combat experience, including the experience of local wars, is an essential condition for increasing the combat readiness of the Armed Forces.

Footnotes

1. "Sovetskiye Vooruzhennyye Sily: Istoriya stroytelstva" [Soviet Armed Forces: History of Organizational Development], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1978, p 252.
2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 15, inv. 11600, file 972, sheet 23.
3. Ibid., sheet 11.
4. "50 let Vooruzhennykh Sil SSSR" [50 Years of the USSR Armed Forces], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1968, p 304.
5. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu opyta voynы" [Collection of Materials on Studying the War's Experience], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 2, 1942, pp 178-184.
6. TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2511, file 20, sheets 186-189.
7. Ibid., inv. 29498, file 4, sheets 62-68.
8. Ibid., inv. 2511, file 20, sheets 150-152.
9. Ibid., inv. 2513, file 83, sheets 515-516.
10. Ibid., inv. 4044, file 41, sheet 356.
11. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyny" [Collection of Combat Documents From the Great Patriotic War], Moscow, Voenizdat, No 25, 1955, pp 129-130.
12. Ibid., pp 7-16.
13. Ibid., pp 135-136.
14. TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2513, file 87, sheets 73-74; file 88, sheets 345-346.
15. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov..." No 28, 1956, pp 7-10.
16. TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2511, file 1030, sheets 62-63.

18. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov..." No 25, pp 18-20.

19. "Sbornik materialov po izucheniyu..." No 4, 1943, p 148.

20. Ibid., pp 150-151.

21. "Sbornik boyevykh dokumentov..." No 18, 1953, p 76.

22. TsAMO, folio 208, inv. 2526, file 22, sheet 33.

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Work Experience of Army Commanders, Staffs in Field

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[Article by Col V.P. Krikunov: "From the Work Experience of Army Commanders and Staffs in the Field"]

[Text] During the years of the Great Patriotic War the commanders and staffs, in organizing the defensive, gave great attention to work in the field as one of the main conditions for successfully conducting defensive operations and combat. At the same time, the first year of the war disclosed substantial shortcomings on this question and caused by the lack of combat experience by the command personnel and by the elaboration of the corresponding provisions in the prewar years basically for junior and middle-level commanders. Thus, according to the requirements of the RKKA [Worker-Peasant Red Army] Provisional Field Manual (PU-36), work in the field for organizing defenses was entrusted to the commanders of the rifle regiments and battalions. On the basis of their personal reconnoiter* they were to clarify the configuration of the defensive forward edge, the positions of the battle outposts, antitank areas, as well as solve other problems. In organizing the defensive there was no provision for superior commanders and staffs to work in the field. The commander of a rifle corps was instructed merely to indicate the general configuration of the defensive forward edge while the divisional commander would adjust this.(1)

The experience of the very first defensive operations showed a frequently arising need for a trip directly to the field by the army commander, his deputies and the field headquarters officers as well as specially established reconnoiter groups for studying it and coordinating it with the decision taken on the map, setting tasks for subordinates, organizing cooperation and resolving other questions.

However, it was not always possible to carry this out completely at the beginning of the war. The content and results of the work done in the field were primarily influenced by the lack of time for organizing combat on new defensive lines as well as the complexity of the situation.

Under such conditions, an army commander, having received an order or directive from the front to take up the defensive, having studied the received task and having assessed the situation, usually took a preliminary and sometimes a final decision using a map. Clarification of the decision taken from the map in the field was predominantly carried out in the course of reconnoitering. For example, at the beginning of September 1941, in repelling thrusts by superior enemy forces on the line of Lake Vitbino, Lake Okhvat, Andreapol and then along the east bank of the Western Dvina, the commander of the 22d Army, Maj Gen V.A. Yushkevich took a decision using the map to retreat and defend a rear line running along the east bank of the Zhukopa River with the subsequent occupying of it with permission of the commander of the Western Front. The reconnoitering of this line was entrusted to a reconnoiter group headed by the deputy army commander and it included basically officers from the engineer troops. This group according to the reconnoiter plan worked out on a map with an explanatory note, over a period of 7 days was to determine the number and place of the battalion defensive areas, the antitank and antipersonnel obstacles, the artillery firing positions and particularly the antitank, the areas for the stationing of army reserves as well as observation and command posts. Here particular attention was paid to the axes of assumed enemy strikes.(2) At the completion of the work by the army reconnoiter group and the approval of its results by the military council, the army staff obliged the divisional staffs to reconnoiter in their areas over a period of 24 hours. The members of the divisional reconnoiter groups were determined by orders of the divisional commanders.(3) The leaders of the army and divisional reconnoiter groups were to submit a brief description of the defensive line and from this the army commander planned to take a final decision for the defenses.

Subsequently, for better work in the field the commanders and staffs began to broaden the personnel of the reconnoiter groups. Thus, in the 21st Army in March 1942, the group headed by the deputy army commander, in addition to representatives from the engineer troops, included officers from the other sections of the army field headquarters (operations, intelligence, artillery, signals and so forth). A similar make-up of the reconnoiter groups was determined by the army staff for the divisions as well.(4)

The reconnoiter groups with such members made it possible to more skillfully clarify in the field the decision taken using a map, the battle tasks for the formations and units as well as certain measures to organize cooperation. Moreover, directly in the field they were able to

resolve many fundamental questions related to the organization of complete support for combat operations, particularly reconnaissance, engineer support, security, camouflage and so forth.

The acquired experience made it possible to incorporate a number of substantial changes in the actual work in the field. The main trends in carrying out the given task were: assigning responsibility for carrying out work in the field directly to the commander; detailed planning of this work and its careful organization with the providing of as much time as possible for subordinates; widening the range of questions settled in the field.

Major steps were taken in improving the organization of the work of commanders and staffs in the field on the basis of the "Instructions on Reconnoitering Field Defensive Lines" approved by the chief of the General Staff on 5 April 1942. These defined first of all the make-up of the reconnoiter groups which included the combined-arms commanders, artillery troops and fortification engineers. The groups, in accord with the commander's decision taken on the map, were to locate in the field the position of the formations and subunits and their fire plan. The instructions also demanded that the reconnoiter groups, in working in the field, provide an opportunity of firing on the enemy ahead of the defensive forward edge using flank and oblique fire from machine guns, antitank and other weapons as well as additional frontal fire from all types of weapons in the interior of the defenses. The reconnoiter material was to be approved by the army (front) military council.(5)

These provisions in the instructions were reinforced by the 1942 Red Army Infantry Field Manual. This required that the divisional commanders personally conduct the reconnoiter together with the regiment and battalion commanders and here they should adjust the defensive forward edge, conduct reconnaissance of the defensive area and organize cooperation.(6)

The work in the field of establishing the defenses for the 51st Army of the Northern Caucasus Front at the end of June 1942, for example, was organized in accord with the stated demands. The acting army commander, Col A.M. Kuznetsov, and the chief of the engineer troops worked out a reconnoiter plan on the map with an explanatory note. This provided for the reconnoitering of the defensive line along the east bank of the Don from Verkhne-Kurmoyarskaya to Nikolayevskaya with the forces of ten reconnoiter groups headed by the commanders of the rifle divisions and the chiefs of the Zhitomir and Ordzhonikidze Infantry Schools and junior lieutenant courses of the army. An army reconnoiter group was also established under the leadership of the senior assistant of the chief of the army staff operations section. The plan set out the assignments and the times for the work of the reconnoiter groups. In accord with the decision taken from the map, these groups were to choose and establish in the field the forward defensive edge, they were to position the battalion defensive areas

and reconnoiter the field. The army group was instructed to reconnoiter the defensive area and lines for the army second echelons and reserves. The chief attention of the senior reconnoiter groups was directed to the axis of the assumed enemy strikes. Some 7 days were allocated to conduct the reconnoiter.(7)

At the beginning of July, the army commander, Maj Gen N.I. Trufanov, reconnoitered with the divisional commanders in their defensive areas. He commenced the work in the 138th Rifle Division (commander, Col N.I. Lyudnikov) in the Verkhne-Kurmojarskaya area. Over a period of 24 hours they studied the field, determined the likely tank approaches and set measures to support the boundary with the righthand unit, the 64th Army. Having completed this work, the commander issued the defensive battle order for the division.

The acquired experience in organizing the defenses in the field was constantly generalized and reflected in the guiding documents. It was possible to achieve unanimity on the questions of preparing for the operational defenses due to the draft 1943 Red Army Field Manual and the "Instructions on Reconnoitering and Constructing Field Defensive Lines" worked out in 1943 and sent out to the troops. These documents required that an army commander, with sufficient time after taking a decision on the map and issuing preliminary orders to the troops, conduct a reconnaissance of the main defensive area. In the field he was to clarify his decision and set the tasks for subordinate commanders, organize cooperation among the combat arms and issue instructions on organizing the defensive work. The army commander was to involve in this work the commanders of the rifle divisions and regiments and only with them clarify in the field the actual configuration of the defensive forward edge and their sectors.(8)

The art of organizing and conducting the defensive was improved. In the operational configuration of an army they began establishing strong combined-arms and tank reserves, artillery groups, antitank artillery and special reserves and mobile obstacle construction detachments. The strengthening of the elements in the operational configuration, the appearance of new ones and their deep positioning brought about a significant rise in the depth of the operational defenses and density of the troops.

Under these conditions, work in the field as well as various exercises and drills came to hold an important place in the work of the commanders and staffs. Resolving the questions of cooperation became an obligatory function for the commander and staff. Thus, greater opportunities were provided for personal contact between superior and subordinates and this became one of the important methods of command. Personal contact made it possible for the commanders to better know the situational conditions in the field and more correctly assess them, it provided an opportunity to more fully

work out one's decision and establish how correctly the set task had been understood by subordinates so, if necessary, to provide help in organizing its fulfillment.

In order that the work in the field be more effective, it was carefully planned. After the preliminary decision had been made on the map, the army commander issued instructions to organize the defenses in the field in the army's zone. The chief of staff and the operations section worked out a reconnoiter plan, as a rule, on the map. This reflected the tasks of the reconnoiter, the number and make-up of the reconnoiter groups, the routes of advance and work points, the time of arrival, the duration of the work and the questions to be resolved at each of them. The necessary number of motor vehicles, the form of clothing for the members and so forth were also determined.

The scope of the questions settled in the field increased sharply. This was determined by the increased arming of the troops with equipment and by the increased strength of a combined-arms army. Chief attention began to be paid to establishing a defense capable of repelling a strike by large enemy groupings, particularly tank. This required that the army commanders and staffs examine two or three versions of troop actions in terms of axes and zones, and that they carefully plan measures for the operational support and organization of cooperation. Each formation was to promptly determine the tasks in terms of time and place in the operation as a whole and for its individual versions and to support the boundaries and flanks with adjacent armies.

Thus, in April 1943, with the going over of the 13th Army to the defensive on the northern face of the Kursk Salient under the leadership of the army commander, Lt Gen N.P. Pukhov, measures of response were worked through according to four different versions of possible enemy actions(9) and then exercises in the field were conducted. After this the army commander, the military council member and the commanders of the combat arms conducted similar exercises with the command personnel of the formations, where in the field in their zones they carefully worked through the specific measures of the actions of each division and brigade. Particular attention was paid to the actions of the army antitank reserve for which they chose and equipped areas and lines for deployment on likely tank approaches. A careful reconnoiter was made of all the maneuver routes and a time study was made for the time required to move up. Similar work was also done in the interests of the tank formations. The repeated trips by officials to the field and the reconnoitering of the axes of assumed enemy strikes provided an opportunity for the army commander to clarify his decision for the defenses and detail the tasks of each formation. Subsequently, this played a crucial role in repelling the mass enemy tank attacks.

Simultaneously with this, the army staff (chief of staff, Maj Gen A.V. Petrushevskiy) worked out a plan for supporting the boundary with the righthand adjacent

units, the 48th Army. Supervision over the execution of the plan was entrusted to a specially established army commission the members of which included representatives of the operations section, the artillery staff and officers from the tank and engineer troops. Under the leadership of the army deputy chief of staff, the commission together with the commanders of the formations and units assigned to support the boundary, in the field marked the defensive forward edge, the subsequent lines, the alternate positions, the location and tasks of the reserves, artillery and reinforcements. Particular attention was given to organizing the fire plan, and to choosing the location of the minefields and antitank obstacles, the axes of the counterstrikes and counterattacks by the second echelons and reserves. An analogous supervisory body was also set up in the 48th Army (commander, Lt Gen P.L. Romanenko) under the leadership of the army deputy commander.

With the joint work of the army commissions in the field, they determined the most probable axes of enemy tank operations and the methods for repelling their strikes, and designated the position of the antitank strongpoints and measures related to engineer support for the boundary. They also organized cooperation between the formations and units assigned to support the boundary and control. At the end of the work a statement was drawn up and this was approved by the front military council. As experience was to show, the work of the commissions aided reciprocal cooperation in the field on all questions of joint actions on the boundary and elucidating the tasks of defending it for the cooperating commanders. In addition, the inclusion in their membership of representatives from the combat arms and staff officers ensured the detailed working out of the special questions of defending the boundary and organizing combat control.

The army staff also organized supervision over the preparation of the defenses. Maj Gen A.V. Petrushevskiy instructed in detail the officers who were being sent to the formations and units. He demanded that particular attention be paid to inspecting the fire plan, camouflage and the organizing of command. In detecting incorrectly understood orders or with the threat of their delayed execution, the chief of staff was to immediately take measures to eliminate the shortcomings and provide help to the subordinate staffs.

Frequently, the army commanders themselves were personally involved in organizing support for the boundaries between the formations on the defensive. For example, the commander of the 31st Army, Maj Gen V.A. Gluzdovskiy, in reconnoitering the area of Medvedev, Shishlov at the beginning of June 1943, set for the commanders of the XXXVI and XLV Rifle Corps the scope of engineer work, the amount of forces to support the boundary on either side and directly in the field indicated the places for weapons and their tasks.(10)

The generalization and assimilation of combat experience were of important significance for developing the art of organizing the defensive. Thus, for effective work in the field in the 65th Army (commander, Col Gen P.I. Batov), they worked out the "Instructions on Reconnoitering a Defensive Line." In these the commanders and staffs were instructed, prior to leaving for the field, to plot on a map the defensive forward edge, the battalion defensive areas (BRO) and the defensive centers in them, the antitank areas and the entire system of antitank defenses as well as the system of obstacles. Here it was pointed out that the forward edge designated in the reconnoiter assignment in the process of carrying this out could be shifted depending upon the terrain.

In going into the field, the reconnoiter groups were to clarify the forward edge, the main defensive centers and lines of trenches, the firing positions for the artillery and other weapons, particularly antitank; the limits of the antitank and antipersonnel obstacles, the availability of water sources and the state of the roads in the BRO; the boundaries for clearing the angular fields of view and the arcs of fire as well as the position of command and observation posts.

The instructions also set out the reporting documents for the work done. The senior reconnoiter groups were required to submit to the army military council a map of the defensive line on a scale of 1:50,000 with the plotted BRO, obstacles and roads requiring repair; an explanatory note with the indicating of engineer measures, the scope of the work and the required amount of materials and manpower. A statement was also to be drawn up with a brief description of the tactical features of the line with the listing of the BRO. In addition, for each of these areas it was essential to submit a scheme on a scale of 1:10,000 with the designating of all the fortification structures and obstacles. On special blanks it was required to make up a card for the fortification structures and BRO as well as a list of the obstacles.(11)

The effectiveness of these instructions was checked out in the army troops in September 1944. At that time the army was forced to go over to the defensive on the Narew bridgehead. The directive issued on 10 September demanded that they immediately commence defensive works and at the same time, prior to 18 September inclusively, conduct a reconnoiter. It was ordered that the reconnoiter groups include officers from the operations, artillery and engineer sections (departments). In the field corps the reconnoiter was to be carried out under the leadership of the corps chief of staff. The reconnoiter groups were to include the artillery commander, the corps engineer and an officer from the operations section. Provision was also made to have reconnoiter subgroups of analogous strength in the first echelon divisions. In the course of their work in the field, they were to clarify the configuration of the forward edge of the main defensive zone. In the reconnoiter they were

to proceed from the demands of bringing the forward defensive edge as close as possible to the enemy under the condition of a good view and fire coverage of the latter.(12)

The reconnoitering of the second defensive zone and the alternate positions was entrusted to the army reconnoiter group. This included the deputy army commander for the engineer troops (the officer in charge of the group), the deputy chiefs of the operations section of the army staff and the 58th Construction Directorate for Military Field Structures as well as representatives from the artillery staff.(13)

The results of the work of the reconnoiter groups were examined by the army military council. In parallel with the work of the reconnoiter groups, the army staff worked out a defensive plan and on 14 September 1944, submitted this to the front's commander for approval.

Careful planning of the defenses considering the work done by the reconnoiter groups was one of the conditions for the 65th Army to successfully carry out the tasks of holding the Narew bridgehead which subsequently was to play an important role in conducting the East Prussian Operation.

An analysis of the given examples of organizing and conducting a reconnoiter in the field by the army commanders and staffs in preparing for defensive operations makes it possible to draw a number of conclusions on the main areas of this work.

The content and methods of the work in the field were improved depending upon the development of the theory and practice of organizing the defenses. These were determined by the situational conditions and primarily by the available time to prepare for combat.

The main thing in improving this work was entrusting responsibility for it personally to the commanders. Along with this the make-up of the reconnoiter groups changed qualitatively. During the first years of the war, when the reconnoitering of the defensive lines was entrusted to the commanders of the formations and units, representatives of the engineer troops were basically assigned to the groups. The deputy army commander for the engineer troops was responsible for carrying out the work. Subsequently, combat practice showed that the reconnoiter should involve officers from the operations section, artillery troops and engineers. The necessity of personal contact between the commander and subordinates in organizing combat in the field arose due to the greater complexity of conditions for preparing the operation and because of the involving in this of formations of the armed services and combat arms. The personal contact of superiors and subordinates on the operational level subsequently became the main method for transmitting the army commander's decision to subordinates. The personal contact method made it possible for the commander to be better acquainted on the spot with the

situational conditions and more correctly assess them, and also provided an opportunity for him to correlate his decision to the specifically studied field, to set correct tasks for the subordinates as well as establish whether they had correctly understood them and when necessary help the subordinate commanders and staffs in organizing the defenses.

An important trend was the widening of the range of questions settled in the field. The main ones here were, for instance: clarifying the configuration of the forward edge of the main defensive zone, the defensive lines, positions, likely tank approaches, artillery firing positions, the location of command (observation) posts, the antitank and antipersonnel obstacles and second echelons (reserves). The routes of their moving up for launching counterattacks, the delivery and evacuation routes and other questions were settled or clarified. Particular attention was given to studying the field on the axes of assumed main enemy thrusts and the organizing of a system of antitank defenses in those places.

From the second period of the war, in organizing work in the field, the army staffs paid important significance to supporting the boundaries and flanks. As experience was to show, these questions were settled by specially established commissions in the following order: initially the lines, positions and likely tank approaches were reconnoitered and then the fire plan and cooperation between the formations and units and adjacent forces involved in supporting the boundaries were organized. Here they frequently held short exercises with the discussing of different versions of actions by the enemy and our troops on the boundaries as well as tactical exercises with the troops to check out the taken decisions. As a result of the range of diverse work conducted by the composite commissions in the troops in the field, the boundaries between the armies and divisions were sufficiently supported.

Of crucial significance in increasing the effectiveness of the work in the field were careful planning and organizing of the reconnoiters in all command elements as well as the writing up of the results of conducting these.

A reconnoiter, as a rule, was organized by the army staff on the basis of the commander's instructions. Proceeding from these instructions, the operations section worked out a reconnoiter plan on a map with an explanatory note. This depicted: the tasks of the reconnoiter, the make-up of the participants, the routes of advance and work areas, the arrival time, the duration and the questions to be resolved at each point. They also determined measures to support the work of the reconnoiter groups. Analogous plans were worked out by the staffs of the corps and divisions.

The reconnoiter results were examined and approved by the army military council. For this purpose the officers in charge of the reconnoiter groups were to submit the appropriate report documents on the work done and

including: maps of the defensive lines with the indicating of the BRO, the deployment lines and the routes of advance to them, the scope of engineer measures to organize them, statements with a brief description of tactical features of the lines, cards for fortification structures, lists of obstacles and so forth. The reconnoiter results and the report documents were used for adjusting the decision and working out a plan for the defensive operation.

Under present-day conditions, the number of forces participating in an operation has significantly risen and this has involved an increase in the number of questions settled in the field. At the same time, the experience of the Great Patriotic War has largely not lost its importance for our times and with a creative approach can be successfully employed and produce positive results in the practical activities of the commanders and staffs.

Footnotes

* Reconnoiter, that is, a visual study of the enemy and terrain was conducted in the aim of clarifying a decision taken on a map or before taking the decision for an operation (battle).

1. "Vremenny Polevoy ustav RKKA 1936 (PU-36)" [RKKA Provisional Field Manual of 1936 (PU-36)], Moscow, Gosvoyenizdat, 1937, pp 143-145.

2. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 376, inv. 10803, file 27, sheet 23.

3. Ibid., sheets 40-42.

4. Ibid., folio 335, inv. 5113, file 44, sheets 26, 28.

5. Ibid., folio 120, inv. 9837, file 39, sheets 4-7, 13.

6. "Boevoy ustav pekhoty Krasnoy Armii" [Red Army Infantry Field Manual], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1942, p 207.

7. TsAMO, folio 120, inv. 9837, file 39, sheets 20, 24, 25.

8. "Polevoy ustav Krasnoy Armii 1943 g." [1943 Red Army Field Manual], Moscow, Voenizdat, 1943, pp 246, 247.

9. TsAMO, folio 226, inv. 321, file 34, sheets 91, 92.

10. Ibid., folio 908, inv. 36843, file 5, sheets 2-4.

11. Ibid., folio 422, inv. 10496, file 389, sheet 240.

12. Ibid., sheets 231, 235.

13. Ibid., sheet 234.

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Attack Aviation Tactics Against Tanks

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[Article by Col V.V. Anuchin, candidate of military sciences: "Tactics of Attack Aviation Operations Against Tanks"; the article was written from the experience of the Great Patriotic War]

[Text] The defeat of the enemy on the battlefields of the Great Patriotic War was achieved by the joint efforts of all the Armed Services and combat arms. In combating the enemy tanks which had been given an important role in implementing the plan for a blitzkrieg, attack aviation achieved major successes.

For attacking the USSR, the Nazi Command concentrated along our Western frontiers a troop grouping which numbered around 3,400 tanks and assault guns.(1) With the outbreak of hostilities, this armored armada pushed into Soviet territory. Even the first months of the war showed that the enemy panzer units moved to the battlefield in columns along parallel routes and then concentrated for the assault and after artillery softening up went over to the offensive. The medium tanks, as a rule, were in front and behind them the light tanks. Significant forces of fighters and ground air defense weapons covered them against air strikes.

Soviet attack aviation which had as one of its main tasks the combating of tanks, by the start of the war had received just 249 IL-2 attack planes from industry.(2) The remaining aircraft fleet was represented by obsolete types of fighters (I-15bis I-153) adapted for action against ground targets. For this reason the IL-2 attack planes operated in small groups of one or two flights (3-6 aircraft) and chiefly attacked the Nazi panzer columns on the march.

In accord with the then existing views on the employment of attack aviation, groups of IL-2 came out on the tank columns and attacked them from a roof-top altitude or after executing a "hump" maneuver from an altitude of 150-300 m (depending upon the caliber of the suspended bombs and the delay time of the fuzes). The pilots carried out bombing from level flight coming in along the target while fire from the 20-mm cannons was carried out using armor-piercing incendiary ammunition from a glide at an angle of 5-10 degrees approaching across the target (a range of not more than 400 m).(3) With the absence of enemy fighters in the air, a target was attacked several times.

For hitting the tanks they employed high-explosive and fragmentation high-explosive bombs such as the FAB-100, FAB-50 and OFAB-50 with delayed-action fuzes as well as bombs from cast paper and the AZh-2 capsules with self-igniting fluid (the total payload of a IL-2 was

400-600 kg). From the winter of 1941-1942, the attack planes began to be equipped with devices for rockets with a caliber of 82 mm and later 132 mm. In the event of a direct hit these could knock out light and medium tanks. But because of their great scatter in firing, the rockets were basically used to attack tight columns and accumulations of armored equipment. As experience showed, cannon fire was effective only against light tanks and armored personnel carriers which had an armored thickness of not over 20 mm.

Operations of the attack planes from low-level flight ensured surprise for the attacks, they reduced losses from antiaircraft artillery fire, they excluded attacks by enemy fighters from the rear hemisphere and were marked by rather high results. However, there were also shortcomings:

- a) The proximity of the ground required constant monitoring of the altitude and impeded the maintaining of the place in the battle formation, orientation, the detecting of the tanks and aiming;
- b) The short period of time spent over the target reduced the effectiveness of the combined employment of all existing weapons;
- c) The ricochet of the bombs in striking the ground and the use of delayed action fuzes in them reduced the accuracy and effectiveness of the bombing;
- d) The use of instantaneous fuzes in the bombs did not ensure the safety of the attack planes against being struck by fragments;
- e) The uniformity of the tactical procedures employed by the pilots permitted the enemy to set up a system of strong defensive fire using all types of weapons including mortars, flamethrowers, antitank cannons and landmines.

The tactics of the attack planes against tanks which were in concentration areas or advancing in battle formations virtually in no way differed from the described. The use by the pilots of just two methods of ground attacks did not make it possible to fully realize the fire power of the IL-2 aircraft. The tactics based just on the merits of low-level flight and armored protection required revision. The attack planes were unable to actively defend themselves against enemy fighter attacks; dependable cover of the groups from the air was difficult to achieve; due to the extended stay in the fire area of ground weapons the aircraft sustained a large amount of damage and after returning from the missions required major overhaul; the possibility was excluded of uniting the attack planes into large groups in the aim of increasing the density and power of the bomb strikes; increased fuel consumption reduced the tactical operational radius.

Changes in tactics did not come about all at once. Thus, even in December 1941, at a conference of flight personnel to exchange combat experience held in the 1st Reserve Air Brigade, the opinion was voiced on converting to actions from medium and low altitudes from a "circle" battle formation. In launching the strikes from a dive it was easier to seek out small-sized and mobile targets, aiming was facilitated and the accuracy of the bombing and strafing increased. However, many air commanders were in no rush to make use of the given recommendations, as they believed in the successful operations of the attack planes from low-level flight. In the aim of accelerating this process, the people's commissar of defense in an order of 17 June 1942 demanded that the effectiveness of attack aviation operations be increased by launching the strikes from medium altitudes.(4) From autumn the pilots of a number of the attack air regiments began to attack the mobile targets from an altitude of 800-1,200 m with a dive at an angle of 20-35 degrees.(5) This immediately increased the results of the attacks.

However, it soon became apparent that for successful operations under the new conditions it was essential to increase the maneuverability of the attack groups. The existing organization of the flights and their basic "V" formation no longer corresponded to the altered tactics. For this reason a three-aircraft flight was replaced by a flight consisting of two pairs and this was aided by the appearance in the units of two-seat IL-2 aircraft having reinforced defensive weapons (in the aft cabin was an air gunner with a machine gun) and equipped with radios. "The basis of the battle formation of attack aircraft," stated the Regulation on Combat Operations of Attack Aviation (NShA-44) is the pair or two-plane element consisting of the aircraft of the commander of the element and the pilot. The two-plane element should be well trained and united by a feeling of comradeship and confidence; in combat the aircraft of the element should provide mutual aid to one another."(6)

The TOE for the attack aviation regiments were revised. The number of aircraft in the units was increased from 20 (two squadrons of 9 IL-2 and 2 IL-2 of the regiment's command) up to 32 (three squadrons of 10 IL-2 and 2 IL-2 of the regiment's command). This was possible due to the rapid rise in the number of attack aircraft (the average daily output of IL-2 by the evacuated aviation plants reached 40 and in December 1942, they were already around 30 percent of the entire Air Forces aircraft fleet). They began constituting attack aviation divisions and corps in the air armies created on the fronts.

The squadron was the main combat unit of attack aircraft and this consisted of two flights and the commander's two-plane element. Usually it operated at full force in "V", "echelon" and "serpentine" formations of the flights as well as a "circle." The "circle" formation was used particularly frequently as this ensured extended and continuous fire effect against the enemy, dependable

protection of the groups against fighter attack and freedom of maneuver for each crew. A "closed circle" consisted of 6-8 aircraft following one behind the other at a distance of 600-800 m and covered each others' aft hemisphere by cannon and machine gun fire. The flights carried out missions in "echelon," "V" and "line abreast" formations of the two-plane elements with intervals of 50-150 m and distances of 15-20 m, while the two-plane elements employed a "line abreast," "echelon" and "column" formations for the aircraft with the same parameters.(7)

While at the outset of the war the attack planes combated enemy tanks using the method of wave actions in small groups, in the second half of 1942, with the greater fire power of the IL-2 aircraft, the increase in their number and the improvement in tactical procedures, concentrated strikes began to be made with the forces of several squadrons and the "lone wolf" method began to be employed.

These combat methods were widely employed by attack aviation in the second period of the Great Patriotic War. Concentrated strikes against panzer groupings were usually launched with the forces of an attack regiment, as a rule, during the period of the air softening up for the assaults of the ground troops. Wave actions were conducted predominantly in the course of air support for the troops in the aim of protracted and continuous action against the enemy. Attack aircraft groups consisting of 6-12 planes remained over the battlefield up to 15-20 minutes each and made from three to six passes at the target. For "lone wolf" actions, search areas were assigned for the tank crews and complete freedom was given. The "lone wolves" operated in two-plane formations or flights at low altitudes, widely using the camouflage properties of the terrain.

The formations of the two-plane elements, flights and squadrons remained as before, only now the "circle" was formed both from individual aircraft and from two-plane elements. From October 1943, the number of combat aircraft in the attack aviation regiments was increased up to 40 (three squadrons of 12 IL-2 and the command flight). The regiments began operating using "serpentine" or squadron "column" formations.

The attack aviation was now equipped with just two-seat IL-2 the production of which had been introduced by the aviation industry. They had stronger armor, the capacity of the fuel tanks was greater and a more powerful engine had been provided. This improved the performance of the aircraft and this made it possible to increase their bombload to 600-1,000 kg. In the gunner's cockpit were a large-caliber 12.7-mm machine gun, and the 20-mm cannons began to be replaced by a 23-mm one and on certain attack planes, a 37-mm gun. The shells of the latter destroyed medium tanks and with a hit at vulnerable points, also the heavy T-V Panthers.

However, the most effective weapon was the PTAB special antitank bombs with a hollow charge and these were first employed by the attack pilots in the Kursk Battle in July 1943. Regardless of their low weight (1.5-1.6 kg), such bombs with a direct hit burned through armor up to 60 mm thick. Here the gasoline tanks were ignited, the shock wave and fragments of armor hit the crew and ammunition exploded rather frequently. The high effectiveness of a bomb was explained by the directed action of the shock wave the speed of which reached 11,000 m a second.(8)

The dropping of a large number of PTAB from each aircraft (up to 144 pieces) provided the high probability of their direct hit on a small target. For this reason with ground attack actions against any battle formations of the panzer subunits, the latter suffered significant losses. For example, on just one day of 5 July 1943, pilots from the 291st Attack Air Division with these bombs destroyed 30 Nazi tanks.(9) In the course of the Mius Operation of the Southern Front on 2 July of the same year, a group of 8 IL-2 from the 504th Attack Air Regiment of the 1st Guards Attack Air Division under the command of Hero of the Soviet Union, Capt M.I. Smilskiy, attacked an accumulation of tanks (around 70) concentrated for a counterattack some 2 km to the south of Mine No. 1. Having made five runs from a "circle" and having consumed 1,232 PTAB, the attack planes had set 15 enemy vehicles afire.(10)

The ground attack strikes against tanks in the second period of the war were made from level flight and from a dive from an altitude of 1,000-1,500 m. A dive attack was the basic method. In executing this the pilots initially launched rockets and from an altitude of 400-600 m dropped bombs.(11) "Hump" or low-level attacks were made in those instances when it was essential to achieve maximum surprise, against targets of significant size or with low cloudiness.

The combat methods of the attack planes during the third period of the Great Patriotic War remained unchanged and only their content was somewhat altered. Thus, concentrated strikes began to be made by the forces of one or two air regiments (40-60 aircraft) operating against the detected tanks in single "circle" formations of flights or a squadron "column." To ensure extended action against the enemy, the attack squadrons scrambled from the airfields according to a set schedule and continuously relieved one another over the battlefield. The "lone wolf" method began to be used significantly more often. It was employed particularly widely under bad weather conditions and in pursuing the retreating enemy. The "lone wolf" planes operated in the rear of the Nazi troops at a depth of up to 100-150 km.(12)

During this period the aviation equipment continued to improve and be replaced. The new all-metal two-seat IL-10 attack plane with reinforced armor was developed

and begun to be delivered to the units in October 1944. The main difference of this aircraft from the IL-2 was its better vertical maneuverability and higher speed.

In the course of the Great Patriotic War the attack pilots had to launch strikes against enemy tanks which were in different positions, such as: in columns on a march; at concentration areas at the forming-up positions and undergoing fueling; dispersed over open terrain and camouflaged in population points, in planted areas, on the edges of forests and groves; advancing in battle formations. The effectiveness of attack aviation operations depended largely upon the presence of reliable information on the location and position of the tanks and with the movement of the latter, on the approximate position of them at the moment of arrival of the attack groups. For assessing the situation, the staffs of the attack aviation regiments used the intelligence briefings of groups returning from combat missions; the data of the guidance radios and which they received from the ground troops and in-air aircraft; the results of reconnaissance and final reconnaissance carried out by their own forces; intelligence data from the superior staffs and adjacent air units.

On the basis of analyzing all the information they determined ahead of time the optimum routes of flight and battle formations of the attack groups. Subsequently, in the course of carrying out the set mission, the pilots searched for the tanks visually, with the help of the guidance radios and target signals from the ground troops. The presence of dispersed and camouflaged enemy armored equipment in a given area was determined from a number of characteristic features such as the tracks, intensity of antiaircraft fire and so forth.

Depending upon the position of the detected tanks, the attack planes in groups reformed for launching the strike. They usually operated from "serpentine" or "circle" formations against tank columns on the march; they employed a "circle" or "figure 8" against accumulations of equipment at the forming-up places or in fueling; a "circle" was employed against tank formations which were advancing or dispersed over the terrain.(13)

The "circle" was the main and universal formation for the attack planes. In addition to the "closed circle" a so-called "free circle" was employed, when the aircraft maintained only the general direction of flight and for all the rest the pilots were granted complete freedom. They successively attacked the tanks making three or four individual attacks in a circle. This made it possible to most efficiently consume the unit of fire and increased bombing and strafing accuracy. The continuous maneuvering in the process of flight disrupted the fire plan of the antiaircraft artillery and ensured the rapid suppression of the detected air defense weapons. In addition, the "free circle" could be quickly reshaped into a "closed" one and repel the attack of enemy fighters without stopping the attacks on the ground targets.

In those instances when the tanks were positioned in concentration areas covered by heavy antiaircraft fire, the attack planes operated in a "figure 8" formation. Here over a complete figure each pilot made two attacks. The flight of the aircraft along the complex trajectory reduced the effectiveness of fire by ground antiaircraft weapons. However, the mutual protection of the crews against fighter attack in the groups was weakened. For this reason the given formation was employed only in the absence of enemy fighters in the air or with a dependable cover by our own fighters for the attack planes.

The "serpentine" formation was employed in attacking Nazi tank columns moving without a fighter cover. Depending upon the length of the column, the attack planes made three-five attacks each and retreated to their territory in a "serpentine." This was at the same time one of the best types of antiaircraft maneuver.

Very frequently the attack groups of attack aviation in the course of carrying out a mission changed their formations in accord with the developing situation. For example, on 15 August 1944, 6 IL-2 under the command of Guards Sr Lt V.G. Kozenkov was directed by a ground radio to an enemy column of 20 tanks. The group reached the target and made the first strike in a "serpentine." With the appearance of Nazi fighters, it quickly reformed into a "circle." Having provided reciprocal fire cover, the crews made another two passes per plane. As a result of this, two tanks were burned up and four were damaged, the fire of one field artillery battery was neutralized and up to a platoon of infantry destroyed. The group was without losses.(14)

The number of aircraft making a sortie for a combat mission was always determined depending upon the number of discovered enemy tanks. For launching strikes at targets consisting of 10-20 units, 3-5 groups of attack planes (with 6-8 aircraft in each) were assigned and these groups operated successively or 2 simultaneously. Accumulations of armored equipment (up to 70-100 units) were attacked by groups consisting of squadrons using the wave method over an extended period of time, up to several hours.

However, it must be pointed out that in all instances the carrying out of the attacks ultimately came down to the individual actions of the crews. If the tanks were located in a small area of terrain, each pilot aimed at the center of this group target (the middle tank). Bombs were released in pulling out from a dive in a series from two or four bays considering the covering of the entire area. With the dispersed positioning of the tanks, aiming was at individual vehicles. All actions of the pilots remained as before, only the dropping of the bombs in each pass was made from one or, extremely rarely, two bays. Freed of the bombs, the crews began strafing. The targets were strafed with rockets and long bursts of cannons and machine guns. The pilots avoided head-on attacks and endeavored to come in at the tanks from the rear or the side (the armor was thinner and there was the greater

probability of a hit of the engine or gasoline tanks). The bombload of the aircraft flying out to attack accumulations of tanks or columns of them consisted of the antitank bombs. If the set mission envisaged actions against tanks advancing in infantry battle formations, the bombload was combined: 50 percent antitank bombs and an equal number of high-explosive fragmentation bombs.

The attack planes struck the enemy tank formations, as a rule, under conditions of active resistance from the enemy fighters and antiaircraft artillery. For this reason, for covering the formations of the attack groups, fighters were widely employed. For carrying out this mission, they were employed with the following methods of action: direct escort of the attack planes in flying to the target and back, covering the groups on individual sectors and in the target area by clearing the air space and setting up mobile screens, sealing off the base airfields of the enemy fighter aviation. The number of cover fighters depended upon the size of the attack groups and the expected enemy air resistance.

However, when necessary the attack planes themselves could successfully repel attacks by Nazi pilots. This was aided, in the first place, by the high performance of the IL-2 and IL-20 aircraft (good maneuverability, powerful gun and cannon weapons and armor protection), and secondly by the possibility for each crew to conduct all-round observation of the air situation (the pilot in front and the gunner to the rear) and this excluded surprise attack.

Reduced losses were also achieved by selecting the optimum group formation. In flying along a route, the attack planes, in widely employing maximum low altitudes, flew chiefly in "V" or "echelon" formations which ensured the greatest density of defensive fire. For repelling fighter attacks over enemy-occupied territory, the attack planes regrouped in a "circle." The crews received freedom of maneuver and securely covered one another by firing cannons and machine guns. Experience shows that well-trained groups successfully countered the enemy. For example, in June 1944 alone, crews from the II Attack Air Corps (commander, Lt Gen Avn V.V. Stepichev) conducted 17 air battles in which 13 Nazi fighters were downed.(15)

Regardless of the aircraft armor, antiaircraft weapons represented the greatest danger for the attack aviation. The Nazis covered their tank subunits with fire from 20- and 37-mm guns mounted on tracked armored carriers. The basic method of combating the aircraft artillery was to neutralize it using the forces of the attack aircraft themselves. This mission was carried out by specially trained crews the number of which, depending upon the situation, was up to a third of the attack group. These aircraft flew ahead of the battle formation or on the flanks and had the appropriate ammunition. For neutralizing the antiaircraft weapons, they employed rockets, cannons, machine guns and the AO-25 fragmentation

bombs which destroyed not only the personnel of the crews but also the guns themselves. If there were no enemy fighters in the air, the cover fighters also participated in suppressing the antiaircraft artillery. Under these conditions all efforts of the attack planes could be concentrated on combating the armored equipment.

The Soviet pilots were also able to reduce the effectiveness of antiaircraft fire by employing the element of surprise and utilizing evasive maneuvers. Surprise of the strikes was achieved by coming in at the targets at roof-top altitude (at medium altitudes with a subsequent sharp drop to maximum-low ones) from the direction of the sun or from out of clouds, from the flanks or from territory occupied by Nazi troops. The actions of the groups in "circle," "figure 8" and "serpentine" formations significantly reduced the losses of attack planes as the direction, speed and altitude of the aircraft were constantly changed, and the IL-2 spent a significant time banking and this prevented the antiaircraft artillery from aimed fire.

The attack planes were controlled in launching strikes against tanks from command posts and by the group commanders. At the beginning of the war, due to the absence of radios on a majority of the IL-2, the commanders directed the actions of his wingmen in the air by the evolutions of their aircraft, while being in radio contact with the command posts located at the base airfield. With the increase of delivery of ground radios in the Air Forces and the equipping of the attack planes with aircraft radios, radio became the basic means of control.

From the summer of 1943, the commanders of the attack aviation corps and divisions began to direct the actions of their subordinate formations and units from forward command posts [PKP]. The PKP were set up in direct proximity to the observation posts of the ground troop commanders. Operations groups were located at them and aviation representatives (aviation guidance officers) with communications equipment were sent out to all combined-arms formations. The representatives provided target designation and guidance of the attack planes to the designated objectives. By the start of an attack radio guidance was usually halted in order not to distract the commanders from control of their groups.

The experience of the Great Patriotic War shows that the choice of the method of action against the tanks depended upon numerous factors, including: the set task and the nature of the target; the degree of resistance from enemy antiaircraft weapons and fighter aviation; meteorological conditions and training level of the crew. A routine use of the methods and tactical procedures led to a situation where the enemy mastered these and employed effective countermeasures as a result of which the attack planes suffered unjustified losses. For this reason the organization and execution of each ground attack strike were carried out considering the existing ground and air situation.

The change in tactics was substantially influenced by the increased number of IL-2 aircraft and their modernization, by the appearance of new weapons, by the improvement in the organization and establishment of the attack aviation units, by the introduction of radio and by the acquired experience and increased combat skill of the personnel. In this process one can note the following main directions: improvement in the methods and tactical procedures, the methods of attack and formations of the attack planes; increased power and accuracy of the strikes; the elaboration of methods to combat air defense weapons; improved control of combat.

Footnotes

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Party-Political Work: Mine-Sweeping in Gulf of Suez

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[Article by Capt 1st Rank T. P. Kozlov: "Combat Mine-Sweeping in the Gulf of Suez"]

[Text] The Gulf of Suez (northwestern part of the Red Sea), and the Suez Canal, which links it with the Mediterranean Sea, have long been considered one of the important sectors of the international sea route. But ship traffic through it was halted due to the destructive consequences of the Arab-Israeli wars of 1967 and 1973. The latter of these wars, during which the coastal areas of Syria and Egypt, including the aquatoria of the Suez Canal and Gulf of Suez, were zones of active combat operations, had an especially negative effect on navigation.(1) Naval forces of the opposing sides, along with other tasks, carried out defense from the sea of the coast, naval bases and ports. They defended their own and attempted to destroy enemy lines of communication, and carried out minelaying.(2)

Convinced that independent restoration of safe shipping in the Gulf of Suez was fraught with insurmountable difficulties, the Arab Republic of Egypt (ARYe) sought help from the USSR. Under most difficult conditions, Soviet sailors carried out mine-sweeping efforts well and on time. As was subsequently noted in the press, they "endured this test with honor, and demonstrated high moral staunchness and self-control at critical moments."(3) The party political work carried out on the ships and shore positions largely facilitated success. It is the purpose of this article to show some of its particularities, which were demonstrated during the preparation of the mine-sweeping detachment for operations, during the transit of the ships by sea, and at the time of direct fulfillment of their assigned mission.

A number of factors influenced the content of party political work during the preparatory period. The most essential of them were: putting together the headquarters and political department, changes and rearrangements in

individual ship crews, and reexamination and improvement of the structure of party and komsomol organizations, caused by the creation of a non-standard formation — the detachment of ships;(4) the lack of practical experience in combating mines on the part of the overwhelming majority of the personnel, the significant remoteness of the area of combat mine-sweeping and the specific political, hydrographic and climatic conditions in this area; and, the small amount of time allotted for preparation.

Organization of the headquarters and political department, despite the brevity of the preparation, was carried out with total care and thorough discussion of candidatures by the Pacific Fleet headquarters and political directorate. Capt 1st Rank A. N. Apollonov, detachment commander; Capt 2d Rank Yu. P. Blinov, chief of the political department and Capt 3d Rank V. D. Orlov, chief of staff, all who had previously served on mine-sweepers and were knowledgeable of mine-sweeping, took part in this work. They studied the personal qualities of the officers, both in conversations with them, and through documents. They selected only volunteers.

All officers had an attitude of great responsibility toward their assignment and were actively included in preparations for accomplishing the mission. For example, Capt 3d Rank V. A. Mazurov, flagship mineman, made extracts of reference and memoir literature, collected newspaper and journal clippings on the history of the development of mine-sweeping ships, mine-sweeping weapons, mines, and the most characteristic instances of combat mine-sweeping in world wars I and II and the post-war period. On the advice of Capt 2d Rank Yu. P. Blinov, chief of the political department, he studied the articles by Adm N. N. Amelko, "The Battle Against Mine Danger in the Red Banner Baltic Fleet in 1941-1942," Reserve Rear Adm Yu. V. Ladinskiy, "Combat Mine-Sweeping in the Red Banner Baltic Fleet in 1943-1944,"(5) and familiarized the ship minemen with their content. Capt 2d Rank B. N. Belonogov, assistant detachment chief of staff, collected material on the military and political situation in the Middle East in the area of the mine-sweeping. Capt 2d Rank S. V. Tarelkin, flagship navigator, generalized information about the navigational particularities of the transit route and the Gulf of Suez. Capt Lt V. N. Slesarenok, deputy detachment commander for electromechanical matters, took part in developing instructions and recommendations on the battle by damage-control parties for survivability of the ships' technical devices and mechanisms. Capt 3d Rank A. K. Yaremchuk, political department propagandist, compiled the mass agitation and propaganda plan, which was approved by the chief of the political department after discussion. Individual or combined meetings were held at the end of each day with the officers of the headquarters and political department. At these meetings the results of the work on the ships were discussed, and the next tasks were posed.

Great attention was paid to improving the structure of the party and komsomol organizations. Thus, on the

seagoing mine-sweepers (except for one that had a party group), and on the repair ship and other auxiliary craft, primary party organizations were created. The communists on the coastal and inshore mine-sweepers, in view of their small numbers, entered the party organization of the headquarters of the subunit of mine-sweeping ships. A primary party organization of the detachment headquarters and political department was formed, where communists from the operating elements were also registered. Elections were held here, and in the other party organizations. Capt 2d Rank S. V. Tarelkin, CPSU member, was unanimously elected party buro secretary. The communists that he led rendered substantial assistance on the ships in holding meetings, compiling plans of work, defining party and komsomol assignments, and distribution of CPSU members according to combat shifts. A meeting took place of party activists, who shared their experience in conducting party work on distant cruises. Speaking at the meeting, Capt 3d Rank V. F. Kozachenko, senior political department instructor on organizational party work, reminded the participants that the success of the combat mine-sweeping would depend largely on the high personal examples set by the communists.

The majority of detachment personnel did not have any practical mine-sweeping experience. It is true that all the crews were trained, they had repeatedly accomplished mine-sweeping tasks during inspections and exercises; they included high-class category specialists, who had excellent knowledge of the equipment and were able to use it. But, it is one matter to operate in a training environment, and another in a real environment, when the mines are real and live. The chief of the political department compiled a list of those who had already participated in combat mine-sweeping. On this list, for example, were the names of communists Capt 2d Rank V. L. Kolobov and Warrant Officer B. S. Pigalin. The former, commander of a mine-sweeping subunit, had to his credit 14 disarmed mines, swept during the post-war years.(6) The latter, senior non-commissioned officer of a team of minemen on one of the ships, was awarded the Order of the Red Banner for participation in post-war combat mine-sweeping, but his service on mine-sweepers began back in 1944 on the Baltic.(7) Capt 2d Rank Yu. P. Blinov initially spoke with each of them, detailed the topics of the discussions with the men, and recommended several books, examples from which could strengthen the talks given to the sailors. The headquarters and political department spoke and disseminated instructions and recommendations on the experience of combat mine-sweeping in the war and during the post-war years among the commanders and political workers of the ships.

The specific features of the mine-sweeping area were considered during planning and carrying out measures in the course of preparing for the forthcoming mission. First, it was necessary to negotiate 5,000 miles enroute to the area, and pass through 5 seas and 2 oceans.(8) Second, there was a tense military and political situation

in this area. Third, the latitudes of the detachment's course were among the hottest on the planet; the Soviet sailor's expected unaccustomed heat conditions, limited fresh water and sandstorms. Fourth, great difficulties could be created by coral reefs and the complex relief of the bottom in the Gulf of Suez; inaccurate maps of the Red Sea and of navigation manuals of it; and rather primitive navigation equipment in the mine-sweeping area. Later, as the work was already going on, A. N. Apollonov would lament in a conversation with correspondents that the true location of navigation dangers often did not correspond to designations on the maps, and that "Red Sea sailing directions lie outrageously."(9) The detachment's command experienced still greater difficulties in ascertaining the mine situation, since it did not have appropriate precise information. Finally, the Soviet sailors had to operate not merely a substantial distance from their base, but abroad, in a capitalist country. Communists in the headquarters and political department conducting party political work on the ships and in the subunits related all these difficulties to the personnel, attempting to ensure that each sailor, petty officer, warrant officer and officer was imbued with the responsibility that was placed on them. Great attention was paid to the moral and psychological preparation of the sailors. The participants in the forthcoming combat mine-sweeping learned about the situation that had taken shape in the Middle East and in the Gulf of Suez at political information sessions, and from radio discussions and documentary films. At the request of the detachment command, workers from the fleet political directorate and instructors from the Pacific Higher Naval School imeni S. O. Makarov gave lectures on the Middle East crisis, the Arab-Israeli wars, and the aggressive instigating policy of the NATO countries, led by the U. S. The sailors were told about the customs and traditions of the population of the Arab states, in particular Egypt, and were informed about the domestic situation in the ARYE and the international position of the republic. The ship libraries were filled with appropriate literature and maps, and transmissions from all-union broadcasting were taped.

Party political work was also directed at careful preparation of the ships for the long transit. Discussions took place at political lessons, party, komsomol and ship-wide meetings, conferences of officers, warrant officers and petty officers, and in individual talks, on the need for high readiness of each battle station, and each crew member to fight for the survivability of the ship, on vigilant standing of underway watches, comradely mutual assistance, and cohesive, able actions in various situations.

Taking into account the compressed time period for preparation, the command viewed everything done at base as preliminary work. The primary preparation was carried out while already in transit to the place of assignment. It lasted a month and a half, from 3 June through 15 July 1974.(10) A main feature of party political work in this stage was the narrow thrust of all measures carried

out. Usually on a long cruise the crew of any given ship works on different tasks. Here, the entire schedule, and the entire underway rhythm of the detachment was subordinated to a single goal — how to prepare as well as possible for the combat mine-sweeping, based on the work carried out during the pre-cruise period. On shore it was possible to carry out general measures as well with a substantial portion of the personnel, and separately with officers, warrant officers, petty officers, party and komsomol activists, sailors in their first year of service, etc. At sea, except for rare stops, neither the crew, or even the men of a department could be gathered together as an entity: many stand underway watch. Therefore, the center of party political work shifted to the ships, and mainly to the combat shift.

Working out sweep streaming and sweep recovery, and destruction of mines, were considered the most important aspects of combat training of the crew at sea. In order to give the training sessions better intensity, and at the same time increase the interest in them on the part of the members of the mine-sweeping crews, the results of each day were given in "Combat Sheets," with a detailed critique of successful actions and errors. Such publications were especially popular on the ship where Warrant Officer B. S. Pigalin, deputy secretary of the ship's party organization, was in charge of the team of minemen. Here the results of training exercises were systematically discussed. This took place in this manner. Communist Pigalin gathered the members of the mine-sweeping crew together, and, reading individual examples from the just prepared "Combat Sheet," commented on them and gave his assessment. He compared the course of the training sweep streaming or recovery with practical combat mine-sweeping operations in which he had participated. The party activist also held detailed discussions via the ship's radio transmitter.

CPSU member B. A. Mazurov, a flagship mineman, worked a great deal. Moving from ship to ship he attentively observed the crew training exercises, noted flaws and hitches, and later at the exercise critiques gave useful recommendations on how to avoid errors, achieve greater precision and harmony, and save time. It struck him that some young political workers were not present at the training exercises of the minemen, and were avoiding making evaluations of their actions. Soon Mazurov became convinced that the reason for this was the poor knowledge that these officers had of mine-sweeping. In a conversation with the chief of the political department, he proposed that a class be held with the political officers of the ships, and he held it on one of the days of a planned anchorage. At this class the tactical and technical specifications of the ship mine-sweeping gear and particularities of working with it were discussed. Using as an example a training exercise of a mine-sweeping crew and careful critique of the actions of the sailors, Mazurov discussed characteristic malfunctions of sweep gear and reasons for them. After the well thought out and carefully conducted class, the political officers began to feel more confident in working with the minemen.

Classes on destroying swept mines were conducted intensively. Everyone was involved in this effort. The signalmen had to detect the mine, which was simulated by a box thrown overboard, in a timely manner, and indicate precisely the direction to it; the helmsmen had to hold this course, and the machinist's mates had to maintain and adjust speed. The gunners had to take their places quickly and open accurate fire on command. All the fire crews attempted to destroy the "mine" with the first burst. These exercises were also widely illuminated in the wall press and in radio newspapers, and the crews shared their experience in destroying the "mines."

At the assignment area the preliminary plan for party political work, like the mine-sweeping plan, changed substantially. This was caused by important reasons. All hope of obtaining more accurate information on the minefields was lost. Egyptian officers acknowledged that during the mine laying the necessary annotations on maps were not always made, and when Israeli aircraft appeared mines were thrown out anywhere, often without being completely readied.(11) The Soviet crews not only had to conduct mine-sweeping, but also to teach the subtleties of this work to the Egyptian sailors. At the request of the Khurgada Naval Base command, Egyptian minemen and navigators were located on our ships as special students.(12) The Pacific Fleet sailors operated in coordination with ships of the Black Sea Fleet: the anti-submarine warfare cruiser Leningrad, and the large anti-submarine warfare ship Skoryy.(13) The joint work by the mine-sweepers and ship's helicopters was particularly complex.(14)

Party political work was aimed most of all at creating a psychological climate in the crews that would eliminate even individual manifestations of fear of mines or lack of confidence. This was the subject of a meeting of the headquarters party organization. Communists from the headquarters and political department were distributed among the individual crews and elements to render assistance and conduct individual educational work. Thus, Capt 2d Rank Yu. P. Blinov visited the ship commanded by Capt 3d Rank V. N. Sviridov. Although the mine-sweeper was an excellent one, the political department chief initially was concerned. The commander had arrived recently, just before the departure for sea,(15) and Sr Lt S. F. Mikhaylov, his deputy for political affairs, also lacked experience. Blinov and Mikhaylov walked about the battle stations, observed the actions of the mine-sweeping crew, and talked to people. Then, in the political officer's cabin a brief conversation was held with communists who were off watch. The political department chief familiarized them with the military and political situation in the region. He reported that instances of sweep gear going out of commission and breaking down had become more frequent, since the navigation peculiarities of the area had turned out to be more difficult than anticipated.(16) It is necessary to attune people to greater attentiveness in their work, and a careful attitude toward the sweep gear, stated the political department chief, as well as to teach the sailors

to carry out repairs. He advised them to coordinate with the Sakhalinskiy Komsomolets, and familiarize themselves with the experience already acquired on that ship.

Navigational difficulties made some officers overly cautious. On some ships sweeping was slowed due to fear of damaging or losing sweep gear. Communists from headquarters and the political department took appropriate measures. Capt 2d Rank S. V. Tarelkin, headquarters party organization secretary, along with Egyptian specialists clarified the map of the area, designated all the danger points in the gulf, and provided the new information to the ship's navigators. Communist Capt 3d Rank V. A. Mazurov supported the proposal made by B. S. Pigalin, ship party organization deputy secretary and master of military affairs, to organize competition among the crews for beating the norms for speed of sweeping, extension of work without repairs, and rapid restoration of sweep gear knocked out of action. With the approval of the detachment command, the conditions of the competition were formulated and related to all. The ship minemen were soon included in the competition. Initially B. S. Pigalin's crew significantly outperformed the others; the warrant officer's combat experience had its impact. But, the other crews caught up to the leaders, for example the crew of Chief Petty Officer A. Ye. Keleberda, a komsomol activist. Communist Pigalin himself greatly facilitated this. In breaks between departures for sea (due to stormy weather) he visited the other ships and helped the petty officers train the sweep crews.

The personal example of the communists was the most effective means of mobilizing people to fulfill worthily their state assignment and international duty. Capt 1st Rank A. N. Apollonov, a CPSU member, ably used this means. One day, while Sakhalinskiy Komsomolets was in a minefield, four Israeli gunboats with uncovered large-caliber machineguns surrounded her. At times they followed nearby on a parallel course. Then they simulated a clash, attempting to move the Soviet mine-sweeper off its combat tack to a coral shallows. Having become convinced that their provocation would not succeed, the Israelis exacerbated the situation. One of the gunboats suddenly, having sharply picked up speed, stopped in the path of the mine-sweeper. When they were only about 10 meters apart Capt 3d Rank Sh. K. Ziyayev, commander of the Sakhalinskiy Komsomolets, looked in bewilderment at the detachment commander, who was standing calmly next to him. The latter pronounced coolly: "Hold course." The provocateurs lost their nerve and the gunboat hastened to free the path of the mine-sweeper at maximum speed.(17)

Capt 3d Rank V. N. Sviridov displayed self-control and restraint in a difficult situation, when a bottom mine blew up right off the side of his mine-sweeper. The ship was damaged and water began to fill both engine compartments. The advance preparation of emergency teams to combat water damage helped deal with the consequences of the explosion. The personal example of

communists Capt 3d Rank V. N. Sviridov (ship commander), Sr Lt S. F. Mikhaylov (political officer, ship party organization secretary), Warrant Officer I. N. Yefimov (petty officer of the team of minemen), and others also played an important role in uniting the men.(18)

Instances of courage, skill and comradely mutual assistance were becoming the property of all the ship crews and shore elements. Communists from the headquarters and political department reported these instances when they met with people. Those who excelled were discussed in photo leaflets and operational news sheets, as well as by the ship radio transmitter. Thus, one of the photo leaflets disseminated by the political department among the detachment personnel discussed the selflessness of the personnel of the hydrographic post on (Gubal-Sagira) Island, commanded by Sr Lt Yu. G. Tsurkin. Despite tense watches and enervating heat, communications with the ships located in the minefields, and support of the ships with necessary information were reliable. During a protracted sandstorm the hydrographers ran out of water because they had shared their modest supplies with Arab border guards. But they also withstood this test.(19)

Although in the combat mine-sweeping preference was given to individual forms of working with people, general measures were also organized insofar as possible on the ships and in the detachments. Marxist-Leninist training, current affairs classes and political studies were held according to plan. Mass meetings, for example, were distinguished by effectiveness and efficiency. Thus, a mass meeting organized on the Sakhalinskiy Komsomolets on the occasion of the first swept and destroyed mine had great mobilizing effect. Rear Adm K. T. Serin, representative of the VMF [Navy] Political Directorate, congratulated the men on their success. The political department chief read a congratulatory radiogram from the Pacific Fleet Military Soviet. Then members of the ship's crew were given the floor, and pledged to fulfill the task of the homeland with honor. The crew kept its word. Its combat tally included three destroyed mines. Three red stars that appeared on the pilot house next to the emblem of an excellent ship bore witness to this.(20)

The ship's communists, led by Sr Lt S. F. Mikhaylov, held a topical evening meeting, "In Life There is Always a Place for a Feat," at which Hero of the Soviet Union Rear Adm L. N. Balvakin, representative of the VMF Main Headquarters, was present. The veteran of the fleet talked about the heroism of sailors in defeating militaristic Japan. On the escort ship Metel, which was commanded by L. N. Balyakin, at the time a captain lieutenant, 64 men were awarded orders and medals, and the ship earned the guards title.(21)

A technical conference where the ship minemen and helicopter crews exchanged experience in combating mines was useful. The talks of officers A. N. Apollonov, A. N. Kupriyanov, V. A. Mazurov and G. V. Nikiforov

were interesting. Although it was called a technical conference, mutual assistance, military friendship, and camaraderie and international duty were also discussed. The discussion held here was taped, reproduced and transmitted to each ship.

Despite the great intensity of the work, the political department required that commanders and political workers find time to organize and hold mass cultural and sports measures: collective trips to the local ARYe fishing industry museum; amateur concerts by the sailors; trips to the beaches; and soccer and volleyball get-togethers with Egyptian servicemen. All of this raised the spirits and moods of the sailors, restored their energy and facilitated vigilance in standing watch.

The author of this article repeatedly talked with participants in the combat mine-sweeping, for example with the chief of the detachment political department, Yu. P. Blinov shared several notes that he made in Egypt. Testimonials by Egyptians about our sailors are of particular interest:

"We are grateful to our Soviet friends for the selflessness with which they are working here" (Lt Col Akhmet Tolba); "We learned much from the Soviet sailors. We became familiar with outstanding equipment, learned out to use it better, and, mainly, became convinced of what good hearts the Soviet people have" (Maj Akhab Bakhtimi); "Your sailors are hard working, polite, cultured, and knowledgeable. They work day and night and complain about nothing. It seems to me that they know everything and can do everything. Arab soldiers became firm friends with your sailors. And we Arabs will never forget either you or the help you gave us" (lighthouse chief Ashrafi). These words are a high assessment of the selfless labor of the Soviet sailors, and an assessment of the great work that was carried out in the detachment on educating and uniting the men. Through the commanders, political officers, and party and komsomol activists the political department was able to inspire and unite the sailors, and concentrate their will to carry out selfless combat work in the minefields of the Gulf of Suez. The ranks of the party and komsomol organizations were supplemented during the course of the combat mine-sweeping. One in two sailors became "excellent" in military and political training; 95 percent of the personnel became class qualified specialists. There were no serious violations of discipline on the ships or shore positions.

The effectiveness of party political work was ensured by: taking into account the special features and distinguishing the main directions in preparing to fulfill the task; timely development of a plan and subsequent adjustment of the plan and strict control over its fulfillment; close contact between the headquarters and political department and high activeness on the part of the headquarters party organization; the use of diverse

forms in working with people, with stress on individual influence; and, personal examples on the part of the communists, especially commanders and political officers.

Having successfully passed such a crucial test, the Soviet sailors at the same time received a true baptism by fire, and acquired practical experience. Their actions were assessed highly by the Soviet Government and the government of the ARY.

FOOTNOTES

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5. VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY ZHURNAL, No 5, 1973, pp 17-25; No 10, pp 24-30.

6. MORSKOY SBORNIK, No 11, 1974, p 72.

7. PRAVDA, 11 August 1974.

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9. "Galsami muzhestva" [By Tacks of Courage], Vladivostok, Dalnevostochnoye knizhnoye izdatelstvo, 1975, p 63.

10. "Krasnoznamenny...," p 268.

11. "Galsami muzhestva," p 75.

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14. MORSKOY SBORNIK, No 11, 1974, p 73; No 3, 1975, p 20.

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21. "Geroicheskiye korabli rossiyskogo i Sovetskogo Voyenno-Morskogo Flota" [Heroic Ships of the Russian and Soviet Navy], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1981, pp 164-165.

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Notes on Biography of G.K. Zhukov

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[Article, published under the heading "From Unpublished Manuscripts," by K.M. Simonov: "Notes on the Biography of G.K. Zhukov"; second installment; for the first installment see issue No 6 of this journal for 1987]

[Text] Zhukov entered the war against the Germans as a military leader who already had to his score a decisive victory under combat conditions which were of a modern sort and had involved the use of mechanized troops and aviation. This not only established Zhukov's authority in the troops but, I feel, was also of importance for him himself. The first steps taken in the science of winning were not only military experience but at the same time a moral factor equally important for both the soldier and for the general, for his way of thinking and way of action.

Zhukov's words about Khalkhin-Gol: "Even now I think fondly of this operation," in the words of a man who ended the war in Berlin are very significant. By the start of Khalkhin-Gol, Zhukov had to his score a quarter of a century of military service, a world war and the Civil War, and his record ran from soldier to corps commander. But as a military leaders, leadership over the Khalkhin-Gol Operation was the touchstone for him.

The story going the rounds in the army was that when in 1939 Zhukov was phoned in Belorussia from Moscow and, without explaining anything, ordered to immediately leave for Moscow, he asked only one thing on the phone: "Do I take my sword?" I do not know whether this was the case, but it seems to me that this story, even if a legend, expresses a true understanding of this man's character.

Section 2.

As I have already said, subsequent to Khalkhin-Gol I did not see Zhukov until the day of surrender of the German Army. But his image continued to develop in my mind as it did in the mind of all participants in the war.

Zhukov for me was the man whom Stalin sent to save the situation in Leningrad during the most critical days of 1941 and later summoned him back to Moscow during the most critical time for it, at the beginning of October 1941.

I feel that I am not in error saying that in the eyes of the war's participants our victory at Moscow was linked primarily to two names: to the name of Stalin who remained in Moscow and on 7 November 1941 gave that memorable speech on Red Square and to the name of Zhukov who assumed command of the Western Front at the most catastrophic moment, when the fate of the capital seemingly hung on a thread.

Certainly, the fact that Leningrad did not fall but withstood the blockade and that the Germans were turned back at Moscow are an historical achievement of not 2, not 20 men, but many millions of military and non-military persons, the result of the enormous efforts of all the people. This is all the more apparent at present, with the distance of time.

However, if one speaks about the role of the individual in history in terms of Zhukov, his name is linked in the people's memory with both the salvation of Leningrad and the salvation of Moscow. And the sources of this memory go back into the war itself, into the year 1941, into the then living awareness of contemporaries. This also explains the constancy of their memory when confronted with various events of subsequent times.

The subsequent course of the war made several names of the most prominent military leaders particularly beloved among the people. But among these Zhukov still remained the first love won in the most tragic hours of our fate and for this reason the strongest.

And when at the war's end he was appointed the commander of the front moving directly against Berlin, this seemed natural as the man who had defended Moscow would take Berlin.

I realize that this is very debatable. One might recall that Rokossovskiy who prior to Zhukov was in command of the First Belorussian Front aimed directly against Berlin might rightly consider as unjust his shift to the Second Belorussian Front; it can be said with sufficient grounds that the First Ukrainian Front advancing to the left of Zhukov and under the command of Konev did as much for the success of the Berlin Operation as the troops under Zhukov's command; finally, one might take a different stance about the reasons why Headquarters

precisely at the war's end, at Berlin, left the coordinating of the actions of all three fronts for itself and Zhukov was sent to command one of them.

All this is true. However, I repeat, that when, with the involvement of the other fronts, precisely Zhukov's front took a larger portion of Berlin, the Imperial Chancellery and the Reichstag and precisely Zhukov was instructed to accept the unconditional surrender of the German Army, this was perceived in the people as something completely just and people felt that this was how it should be.

The ceremony of the signing of the unconditional surrender by the German Army has been described many times both in the correspondence of journalists as well as in the memoirs of the military present there. I have also written about this. I will not repeat either the other or myself in describing the details. But I would like to recall certain of my sensations of that day related to Zhukov.

Obviously it can be said without exaggeration that among the representatives of the Allied Command who were present there, precisely he had the greatest and most difficult experience in the war. However, this was the first time that he had ever accepted the surrender of an enemy army and this procedure was new and uncanny for him. If he himself had perceived this procedure as a diplomatic one, he probably would have felt less confident. The secret to that calm certainty with which he directed this event, in my view, was precisely in the fact that he did not perceive it as something diplomatic. The signing of the act of unconditional surrender by the German Army was for him a direct continuation of the work which he had been engaged in for the entire war. He had been ordered to place the final period as a military man, and he did this with the same confidence and firmness which distinguished him in the war.

It is difficult even mentally to penetrate into the soul of someone else, but it must be thought that during these hours Zhukov felt himself not only the commander of the front which took Berlin or the deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief, but also a man who in that hall represented the army and the people which had done more than all the others. And as the representative of the army and this people, he better than the others knew the scale of what had been accomplished and the measure of the hardships suffered. In his conduct there was neither disdain nor condescension. Precisely for his people the just ended war was a fight not for life but to the death and he waged it with the same rigid simplicity which in similar circumstances befits a victor.

Although subsequently, among the vanquished German generals as well as among the Allies who shared the victory with us, there were persons who in hindsight disputed the scale of our contribution to this victory, at that time, in May 1945, there were no divergent opinions about this.

Even the conduct of Field Mar Keitel who signed the surrender left no doubt as to this. One must pay him proper respect. He behaved with suitable dignity. But along with this in his conduct there was something else, something unexpected. Seemingly neither his political views nor his thoughts about his own future would force him to show greater attention to Zhukov than to the other representatives of the Allied Command present in this hall. Rather one might expect the reverse. However, the logic of the lost war, against Keitel's will, was stronger than all the rest. Observing him during the surrender procedures, several times I noticed with what close attention he followed Zhukov and precisely him. This was the bitter, tragic curiosity of the vanquished for the force which Zhukov embodied here, a force which was the most hated and to the greatest degree decisive in the outcome of the war.

Since that time, when I read articles and books which in hindsight doubt the measure of our contribution to the victory over Nazi Germany, I almost always recall Karlshorst, the surrender and the face of Field Mar Keitel who watched Zhukov with an almost eerie curiosity.

After the signing of the act of surrender there was a dinner which lasted far beyond midnight and which had been given by our Command in honor of the Allies. During the dinner there were numerous speeches now lost to my memory, but I did remember one place in Zhukov's speech. The American and English Command were represented by the superior aviation chiefs, Gen Spaatz and Ch Air Mar Tedder. I do not recall to the health of which of the two aviators Zhukov gave the toast, but he said approximately the following:

"I drink to your health on behalf of our soldiers who had to walk all the way to Berlin to see the results of your work."

I have said "approximately" out of caution. But, in my mind, precisely these words were said. And I remembered them because behind them stood what is termed the decisive contribution to victory, there stood the formula of our involvement in this war which cost us so much.

Section 3.

After the war, I happened to see Zhukov during various years: in 1950 and in 1953, in the position as commander of the Odessa and Urals Military Districts, and in 1953-1957, when he held the post of deputy minister and minister of defense, as well as in the last years, when he had retired.

I would like to take up these meetings from a viewpoint from which they are of interest for my notes. But initially one general observation relating to all of them. These occurred at different times for Zhukov, and this made one of the main traits of his character all the more obvious. The nature of this man has always remained

unyielding to outside circumstances. The circumstances change but the man remains himself. This unchangeability of character was not only proof of moral strength but also the source of it. An awareness of his ability not to give into circumstances in turn strengthened this tenacity.

During my first meeting in 1950, I noticed a concern in the persons close to Zhukov who were present at this time. And this is easy to understand. Expelled from membership of the Central Committee and removed from higher military positions, Zhukov was in command of a secondary military district and, in essence, was out of things, and in addition was under the sword of Damocles because they were difficult times. The concerned eyes of those around added even greater reticence than that which he himself set for himself in this conversation. However, while certainly consciously limiting himself in conversation and avoiding certain questions, Zhukov at the same time, in speaking about the history of the war, did not permit himself to skip over hard questions where they inevitably would have arisen in the course of the discussion. Obviously he was rather well aware of the weight given to certain historical facts voiced by him and did not want to consider the attendant circumstances.

I have already quoted what he said then about Khalkhin-Gol. In speaking about his assumption of the position of the commander of the Leningrad Front, he also did not consider it necessary to play down the drama of the situation in which this occurred.

I will give the corresponding place in the notes of our conversation in 1950.

"...Having flown into Leningrad, I immediately went to a session of the military council. The sailors were discussing the question of in what order they would blow up the vessels so that they did not fall into German hands. I said to the fleet commander Tributs: 'Here is my mandate,' and I handed him the note signed by Comrade Stalin where my powers were outlined. 'As the commander of the front, I forbid this to you. In the first place, order the ships to be cleared of mines so that they themselves are not blown up and secondly bring them closer to the city so that they can fire with all their artillery.'"

"They, don't you see, were discussing the question of mining the ships and they, the ships, had 40 units of fire. I told them: 'How can you mine the ships at all? Yes, possibly they might be lost. But if that is to be the case, then they should be lost only in battle, firing.' And when later the Germans went over to the offensive on the maritime sector of the front, the sailors turned their ships against them and they quite simply fled. How else! They were 16-inch guns! Can you imagine what a force this was?!"

In the same conversation, Zhukov in a few words sketched in the situation around Moscow in November 1941. He did not voice the arguments which were generally accepted at that time that the Germans under no circumstances could take Moscow. He spoke about the real facts: why the Germans had not taken Moscow and what they lacked to do this.

"...The last German offensive began on 15-16 November. By the start of this offensive, on the main Volokolamsk—Nara axis, on their left flank they had 25-27 divisions, including approximately 18 panzer and motorized. But in the course of the fighting, their forces were stretched to the limit. And when they were approaching the canal, the Kryukov, it became clear that they had miscalculated. They were at their last breath. They approached, but there was not a single division in reserve. By 3-4 December, in their divisions there remained approximately 30-35 tanks out of 300, that is, just 1/10th. In order to win the battle, they would have needed to have 10-12 divisions in the second echelon on the axis of the main thrust, that is, from the very outset they should have had not 27 divisions but 40. And then they could have broken through to Moscow. But they did not have this. They had already spent all that they had because they had not counted on the force of our resistance."

Now in the history of the Great Patriotic War the fact has long become generally recognized that by the start of our counterstrike at Moscow, the German troops had already received an order to retreat. But at that time, in 1950, it was not acceptable to say this. Although, seemingly, the circumstance that the Germans even before our counterstrikes had been put in a critical situation by the tenacity of our defensive and forced them to retreat, in no way belittled the accomplishment of our army, quite the contrary. But evidently such a description of true historical events at that time seemed less heroic and it was the custom to say that we launched our counterstrike against the Germans who were still continuing to push toward Moscow. But even then, in 1950, Zhukov was not afraid to repudiate what at that time was a generally accepted idea.

"As later became clear from the documents," he said, "on the very night when we began our offensive, Brauchitsch had already issued the order to retreat to the Nara River, that is, he had already realized that they had to retreat and that they had no other solution."

In saying that Zhukov, having been removed from the superior military positions and in commanding a secondary district, "in essence was out of things," I did not quite accurately define the situation in which we met Zhukov in 1950. It would be more precise to say that "it was to be expected that he would be out of things." It was expected but that was not the case. This is what Zhukov himself told me much later, in 1965: "In 1946, when Stalin removed me from the position of deputy minister and appointed me to the Odessa District, I, having

arrived in Odessa, was fully determined not to reduce by a single iota the demands on my subordinates, on the troops and on their combat training. I firmly resolved to remain myself. I realized that it was expected that I would become different, that I would give up and would command the district in a ship-shod manner. But I did not permit myself this. Of course, fame is fame. But at the same time it is a double-edged sword and at times cuts against you. After this blow I did everything to remain as I had been. I saw in this my inner salvation. In restraint, in work, in not losing my force of character under these very difficult circumstances for myself."

When I heard this many years later from Zhukov's lips, I again recalled our meeting in 1950 and remembered his restraint, firmness and reticence to take up ticklish questions. He not only wanted to remain but did remain himself.

The next time I met Zhukov was 2 years later, in December 1952, under circumstances which had changed to the better for him. Having been removed from the Central Committee in 1946, Zhukov at the 19th Party Congress had been elected a candidate member of the Central Committee. There can be no doubt that this was at Stalin's initiative, as at that time there could be no other explanation. Many were pleased by this and at the same time surprised. I was surprised perhaps less than certain others for reasons which require a slight digression. Incidentally, I feel that in the given instance this is justified.

Approximately a year before this, at a session where they were discussing the question of the Stalin Prizes, and in particular the awarding of the prize to Emmanuil Kazakevich for his novel "Vesna na Odere" [Spring on the Oder], Stalin, having responded positively about the novel, suddenly said that it contained a shortcoming which, if not too late, should be rectified.

"Here Comrade Kazakevich," said Stalin, "has portrayed in the novel the military council member Sizokrylov. But in his novel Sizokrylov has been given the role as though he were not a military council member but rather a commander of the front. If one reads those places where this Sizokrylov is present, the impression is created that he is the front's commander, although he is called the military council member. But we know who was in command of this front. It was commanded not by any Sizokrylov but by Zhukov. Zhukov has his shortcomings and we have criticized him for them. But Zhukov did a good job at Berlin, at any event not a bad job. Why then in the novel of Comrade Kazakevich has some Sizokrylov been portrayed and not Zhukov? This does not conform to reality." And turning to the writers present at this meeting, Stalin added, "tell Comrade Kazakevich that if it is not too late, he should give some thought to this question."

It was my lot to talk to Kazakevich about this. Having heard my story, Kazakevich merely grit his teeth. It turned out that Stalin was completely correct. In the novel Kazakevich had initially portrayed not the military council member but the commander of the front. In the circumstances which then existed around Zhukov, it was not possible to publish the novel in the form initially conceived of by Kazakevich. Ultimately he had been forced to give way and call Sizokrylov the military council member although the figure of the front's commander continued to remain behind the actions and conversations of Sizokrylov surviving in the novel. "If only this had come sooner!" was all Kazakevich could answer with chagrin. The novel had already gone through several editions and it was now too late to change anything.

I remembered all of this when after the 19th Congress Zhukov was suddenly nearby at a table during a dinner which the Central Committee had given to the foreign delegates present at the congress. I not only recalled this but considered myself in the right to tell Zhukov. Through his unchanged restraint I could feel that on that evening he was in a good mood. I felt that election to the Central Committee was a surprise for him and certainly the impression this had on his was even stronger. However, the feeling of his own dignity did not allow him once to say a word about this question which undoubtedly concerned him most during those several hours we sat together.

The conversation was about other various things, including about my just published book "Tovarishchi po oruzhiyu" [Comrades in Arms] and, as I now recall, was not too successful from the artistic standpoint. But Zhukov did not take up the artistic aspect in talking with me. The appearance of "Tovarishchi po oruzhiyu" pleased him in the fact that for the first time in literature a book had appeared which described the Khalkhin-Gol events which were dear to his heart as a military man.

Having told me that the factual aspect of the question had been stated rather accurately by me, Zhukov made several comments which concerned chiefly various events which were not depicted in the novel. I recall that here he complained that when we met in 1950, at the beginning of my work, there had been just two talks.

"Unfortunately, I was not able to tell you a great deal," he commented, rebuking more himself than me, with a tactfulness which survived in him with a directness of judgment.

He did not take up any of the more delicate questions at all. The problem was that in the novel, although without any name, there was portrayed the commander of our troop group in Khalkhin-Gol, and behind this figure one could see Zhukov's personality as the prototype of this character.

In publishing the novel, I encountered hesitations among the editors publishing it. Some of my colleagues working there and who without any difficulty guessed who this figure represented felt that with an over-all positive characterization I should have also given it certain negative traits. They were influenced by the critical attitude which existed in those years toward Zhukov and they feared how the corresponding point of the novel would pass the censor. The fears, incidentally were vain. The novel passed the censor safely. My situation was much easier than Kazakevich's situation. Khalkhin-Gol was far distant while the capture of Berlin was in the memory of all, without even mentioning the difference in the scope of these events.

Very long ago, immediately after the war, in reflecting on my novel, from the very outset I did not intend to portray in it either Zhukov or other historical figures under their real names, proceeding from the basic view that when it is a question of living individuals, this should not be done at all in an artistic narration; it differs from the documentary precisely in this. However, I must admit on that evening I was more humanly concerned with how Zhukov would consider the absence of his name in the novel and whether he would consider this an indication of my timidity or the result of attendant considerations. And I was pleased that without going into this delicate question, he spoke about the novel with sympathy, having obviously correctly understood me.

In 1955, I twice visited Zhukov at the Ministry of Defense. The first time when he was still the deputy and the second when he had already been appointed minister.

The first meeting involved the fate of an army political worker whom both Zhukov and I had known well even at Khalkhin-Gol. In serving honorably through the entire Great Patriotic War, in 1950, contrary to his own wish to continue serving in the army, he had been demobilized supposedly because of illness but in fact because of circumstances which were remote from elementary justice. The question was not a simple one and in addition was beyond the immediate competence of Zhukov. Having immediately explained this to me without beating around the bush, Zhukov said that he would do everything within his power, although he could not swear to success.

Recalling Khalkhin-Gol in the context of this conversation, he laughingly told me that in my book I had overdone it, having replaced not only the names of living persons but also dead ones with fictitious characters.

"As for the living, be that as it may, that is your decision," he said, "but the dead? For them the picture is clear! Why not give the real names at least to such a hero of Bain-Tsagan as the Brig Cmdr Yakovlev, and why

replace him by some Sarychev or why not portray the deceased Remizov? They were real heroes. Why don't you have at least these names?"

The main thing in his words and in the feelings behind them was a concern for his fallen comrades at Khalkhin-Gol. But in the irony which he employed with me this time I could also feel something else: somewhere deep in his soul he still wanted the book to give the names of the living. Several years ago he had not been thinking about this but now, it seemed to me, he was, although he did not tell me directly.

The second meeting that year was related to the preparatory work which I had started for the novel "Zhivyye i mertvyye" [Living and Dead]. I asked Zhukov for him to help me get a hold of certain materials from the initial period of the war. He said that the help would be given and sent me to the Military Science Directorate of the General Staff. Later on, having fallen silent a minute, he added that probably it would be beneficial for me to look at the start of the war not only through our eyes but also through the eyes of the enemy as this is always useful to ascertain the truth.

Having summoned an aide and having briefly ordered him: "Bring in Halder," he explained that he wanted to let me read an extensive official diary which had been kept in 1941-1942 by the then chief of the German General Staff, Col Gen Halder.

When several minutes later eight thick notebooks of Halder's diary were lying on his desk, he tapped them with his hand and said that in his view, among all the German documents which he knew, these were probably the most serious and objective evidence.

"Reading for our kind is not always pleasant but essential, particularly for an analysis of our own mistakes and errors, their causes and consequences."

He then turned to a question which, as during our conversation in 1950, continued to concern him, that is, the necessity of an objective assessment of the enemy's forces and capabilities, whether this is a question of history or of today and tomorrow. Unfortunately, I did not write down this conversation and cannot give it in detail without risking a shade of bias. But in this context it seems wise for me to quote precisely here what Zhukov said on the same question subsequently in talks the contents of which I did take down. Here are some of these notes:

"...It is essential to look the truth in the eye and without being afraid say how things were in actuality. It is essential to properly judge the German Army which we had to fight from the first days of the war. We did not retreat a thousand kilometers fighting dummies but rather the strongest army of the world. It must be clearly said that the German Army by the start of the war was better than our army, better trained, better prepared,

armed and psychologically better prepared for the war and involved in it. It had fighting experience and victorious fighting. This played an enormous role. It must also be recognized that the German General Staff and the German staffs generally at that time worked better than our General Staff and our staffs generally and the German commanders during that period thought better and more profoundly than did our commanders. We learned in the course of the war, we learned our lesson well and began to beat the Germans, but this was a protracted process. And this process began from a point where the advantage in all regards was on the German side.

"We are afraid to write about the weakness of our troops in the initial period of the war. The troops were unsteady, they not only retreated but also fled and panicked. A trend can be felt in the reticence to recognize this. Supposedly the people are not to blame only the leadership. In a general way this is true. And as a result this is actually so. But speaking concretely, at the outset of the war we fought poorly not only on top but also down below. It is no secret that fighting side by side were divisions with one fighting well and tenaciously while the adjacent one fled, having taken the very same blow of the enemy. There were different commanders, different divisions and different measures of steadfastness.

"We must speak and write about all of this and I would say that here there is even a pedagogical aspect namely that modern readers, including the youth, should not feel that everything depends solely upon the leadership. No, the victory depends upon everyone, upon every individual and upon his personal steadfastness in battle. Because we know that under the same conditions some individuals behaved valorously and other not. And this must not be played down.

"In speaking about how the Germans lost the war, we now frequently repeat that the question was not Hitler's errors but rather the errors of the German General Staff. It must be added that Hitler by his mistakes helped the German General Staff make errors and he often prevented the General Staff from taking more thoughtful, more correct decisions. When in 1941, after the defeat of the Germans at Moscow, he removed Brauchitsch, Bock and a whole series of other commanders and himself assumed command of the German Ground Forces, he undoubtedly rendered us a major favor by so doing. After this both the German General Staff and the German commanders of the army groups were fettered to a much greater degree than before. Their initiative was restricted. The directives issuing now from Hitler as the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Troops became uncontrollable to a greater degree than was required. The level of independence which existed previously in the German Army in resolving operational questions declined and the dismissal of Brauchitsch with which all of this started was, of course, all to our favor.

"During the first period of the war, we became accustomed to the fact of the German offensive, to the pace of their advance, we became accustomed to failures and

defeats, we became accustomed to seek a way out of the most difficult situations and to take our own counter-measures. But the Germans who at the beginning of the war advanced so boldly and riskily, who defeated us, advanced, and broke through, these same Germans in the second and third periods of the war could in no way become accustomed to the fact that they now had to defend themselves, retreat and tolerate defeats.

"If one traces the history of the war in this second and third period, one can count numerous largely repeating situations in which the Germans again and again fell into the trap, into encirclements, into pockets and, regardless of the repetitiveness of the situations, still could not accustom themselves to fight in what for them was a new, uncustomary situation of defeat and retreat.

"If one takes, for example, the situation which existed before our offensive in Belorussia in the summer of 1944, one has merely to look at a map for it to be completely apparent that we would launch the strikes precisely from those sectors from which we did later on, that we would be able to create this Belorussian and that as a result this could end with a breakthrough some 300-400 km wide which the Germans would be unable to close. The Germans could have foreseen this.

"The logic of events and elementary military intelligence suggested to them the necessity of pulling back their troops from the future pocket, shortening and stiffening the front, creating operational reserves behind their front, in a word, everything that is requisite in similar instances. But the Germans did not do this and as a result were defeated in the Belorussian Operation.

"But subsequently, being in a very difficult situation, when they had nothing to close the gap of 400 km, they must be given their due as they found a bold and correct way out of the situation. Instead of trying to plug this enormous breach by extending their forces, they began by concentrating an assault grouping and launching a meeting strike against us at the center of this empty space. They tied us down, they forced us to engage in battle and thus stopped our offensive. In the meantime in the rear they began establishing a new defensive line and due to this unexpected and bold strike to a significant degree succeeded in so doing. The decision taken by them after the defeat in the Belorussian pocket must be considered bold and wise."

The excerpts given here from talks in 1955, as I recall, are very close to what Zhukov told me previously in his office at the Ministry of Defense. At that time the discussion was about the same thing: an objective assessment of our own actions, be it defeat or victory.

Zhukov returned repeatedly to this question in various years, and when I now reread all my notes and go through all our conversations in my mind, I again wonder at the firmness and consistency with which he

dwelled on one point, that is, with all his hate for the enemy, to sweep away any emotions which impede elucidating and assessing the heart of the matter.

Section 4.

In May 1956, after Fadeyev's suicide, I met Zhukov in the Hall of Columns, in the presidium's room, where everyone had assembled who was to be in the honor guard by Fadeyev's coffin. Zhukov had arrived a little ahead of schedule when he was to be in the honor guard and it worked out that we had 30 minutes to talk together, sitting in the corner of this room.

The subject of the conversation was unexpected both for me and for the circumstances under which this talk was held. Zhukov said how excited and stirred he was then, soon after the 20th Congress. It was a question of restoring the good names of persons who had been taken prisoner, chiefly during the first period of the war, during our long retreats and enormous encirclements.

As I realized, this question had already been taken up at the Central Committee Presidium and Zhukov, as minister of defense, was to present the appropriate proposals for a final ruling on them. He was encouraged by the principled support received ahead of time by him and spoke about this with fervor which even contrasted with his usual restraint and taciturnity. Obviously, this question had touched certain very strong and deep cords in his heart. Certainly (at least it seemed to me) he had been thinking for a long time about this and for many years had been unable to inwardly accept that unjust and unfounded decision which had been given to this question previously. He said with bitterness that according to English laws, the English soldiers and officers who were taken prisoner for the entire time spent in captivity continued to receive their stipulated salary and even were given a certain bonus due to the gravity of the situation in which they were.

"As for us," he said, "our Mekhlis hit upon the formula: 'Anybody who is taken prisoner is a traitor of the motherland,' and justified this by the fact that any Soviet person confronted with the threat of capture is obliged to commit suicide, that is, in essence, he demanded that we add another several million suicides to all the millions of persons who perished in the war. More than one-half of these individuals were tortured by the Germans in captivity, they perished from hunger and disease, but according to the theory of Mekhlis it turns out that even those who did return, having gone through this hell, should be met at home with an attitude that they should repent for not having committed suicide in 1941 or 1942."

I do not precisely recall all Zhukov's words, but their sense was the infamousness of the Mekhlis formula, that is, a mistrust of the soldiers and officers which lay at its base and its unjust supposition that they had been taken prisoner out of personal cowardice.

"Of course, there were cowards, but how can one think this about the several million captured soldiers and officers from that army which all the same halted and defeated the Germans. What do you mean, were they different from those who later entered Berlin? Were they from other cloth, worse or more cowardly? How can one demand a blanket disdain for all who were captured as a result of the catastrophes which befell us at the beginning of the war?..."

Having repeated again the words he had started the conversation, that is, that the attitude toward this tragic problem would be reviewed and that there was an unanimous opinion on this score in the Central Committee, Zhukov said that he considered it his duty as a military man to do everything now to provide the fullest rehabilitation of those who merited this, nothing would be forgotten or overlooked and the violated dignity would be returned to all those soldiers and officers who had fought honestly and who had later suffered the tragedy of being taken prisoner. "All these days I have been thinking about this and am concerned with this," he said.

A year later I saw Zhukov speaking at a meeting during one of the stormiest sessions which I happened to attend. I will not concern myself with the general course of this session but will speak only about one moment which I have remembered for many years. Zhukov reached that point in his speech where he in a harsh manner reminded two or three individuals sitting behind him on the rostrum of the direct responsibility which they had for the events of 1937-1938.

In response to this, one of those to whom Zhukov had addressed his words interrupted him, saying that there were times when one had to sign certain documents whether you wished to or not, and Zhukov himself knew this well enough, and if one delved into the documents of those times one would certainly find some which also Zhukov had signed.

Zhukov turned abruptly and replied:

"No, you won't. Dig away! You will not find my signature!"

I remember how I was struck then by the force and confidence of those words directed to the past.

On the day of the 20th anniversary of the victory over Germany, Zhukov who for 8 years now had been in retirement for the first time took his place along with the other marshals behind the table of the ceremony's rostrum. This was an act of justice. And this is precisely how it was perceived by the persons who had assembled in the hall and among whom at least nine-tenths had participated in the war and remembered well what a role Zhukov had played in it.

When at the ceremony among the names of the other military leaders that of Zhukov was mentioned. For many years his name had not been mentioned from any rostrum and a spontaneous ovation broke out in the auditorium. From the rostrum many glorious names from the war years had been cited and probably under different circumstances the response to the reading of Zhukov's name would have not been so emphatically heavy. He was being applauded with such force and unanimity because at that very time historical justice had finally been done and people in their heart always thirst longingly for this, regardless of the attendant circumstances.

I feel that it was difficult for Zhukov to live through that joyous moment for him in which there certainly was a particle of bitterness because until his name was read out, time had continued to pass inexorably and man is not eternal. Who knows, possibly along with other thoughts in his head there flickered the realization simple in its mercilessness that he might not have survived until this minute.

Late in the evening of that same day and part of the night Zhukov along with several other military leaders spent with us at the Writers' Club at the traditional annual meeting of war veteran writers. Again his restraint and strength of character were apparent.

Need it be said that this night the chief attention of those present at the meeting was directed primarily to him. It happens in life that out of a pure heart, expressing all the strength of their feelings people, without noticing this themselves, lose a degree of measure and put in a difficult situation the person to whom their feeling are addressed.

This is precisely what happened that night. Certain of those present at the meeting, in celebrating the restoration of justice, at the same time showed injustice to the other military guests, in forgetting about their presence at times.

But I felt that Zhukov himself did not forget this for a single instant. This was apparent from his conduct toward his comrades and fellow servicemen sitting at the table and from that brief speech which he initially did not intend to make and did give only having realized that this was indispensable.

In his speech there was not a single personal incident. He spoke neither of himself nor his involvement in the war. This was a speech about the historical accomplishments of the people, the party and the army, a speech by one of the participants of the enormous war directed to its other participants.

I feel that these words were a lesson for those of us who, in rejoicing over Zhukov's presence were ready to lose our feeling of measure. In any event this is how it seemed to me and I felt a great feeling of respect for this man who had experienced so much and who had behaved with such great dignity....

A number of my subsequent meetings with Zhukov involved work on the documentary film "If You Love Your Home," in which I was involved as one of the authors. The film was devoted to the Battle of Moscow and Zhukov, like certain other of its participants and leaders, had agreed to relate before the camera several decisive moments of this battle. The film in its edited form lasted just 90 minutes and the frames where Zhukov describes the Battle of Moscow in it are only a small portion of all that he said. The rest of about 2,000 m of film were turned over to the film repository and are being kept there for history and for future use.

The filming was long and difficult. There were also difficulties related to Zhukov's involvement in it. We were aware of the moral responsibility which we had assumed, asking Zhukov to participate in the film as well as the gravity of the situation which would arise if, due to reasons not depending upon us, the incorporation of the frames with Zhukov talking in the film would not be possible. I feel that Zhukov realized this himself, although he never mentioned a word about it.

The filming was drawn out and constantly being moved. I do not want to go into either the reasons or the validity of these reasons, but the location linked to the history of the fighting for Moscow and where we initially intended to photograph Zhukov (he knew of this), as it turned out, was unacceptable for filming in the opinion of those who had control of this question. Later on, at one time, the very possibility of filming was in doubt. Nevertheless the filming ultimately occurred, in truth, not where we initially assumed but at Zhukov's house, at a dacha near Moscow where he had lived for many years.

I remember well, having driven out to see him to agree upon the days of the filming and to say that they would be done not where we had thought but at his house, I with concern was expecting the question: "Why?" and it would be very difficult for me to answer. But Zhukov did not ask anything only laughing in an understanding way and saying: "Well, if it is to be the dacha then let it be the dacha. Anyway this was also a defensive zone of Moscow."

On the day before the filming Zhukov had an accident. He was out fishing and slipping on wet stones hurt his leg badly. It was hard for him to walk, to sit or to move at all. But he was ready for the filming and did not want to put it off. He had a difficult task of describing before the camera to millions of future viewers the crucial moments of this enormous engagement. A brief description of this engagement and which he had finished at this time still comprised 90 typewritten pages. We were still asking

him for certain vital details of those days which were not in this brief description. In the reflections preceding the filming, hundreds of details and circumstances of the fighting arose in his memory. But from all of this he was to choose only the most essential and tell this before the camera in a concise and free manner.

I well recall the effort which all of this took. And in addition there was the injury to his leg which constantly made its presence felt by sharp pain. Of course, this is only a detail of human conduct, but I was struck by that iron concentration with which Zhukov in front of the camera on that day described the Moscow Battle without forgetting its vital details and at the same time carrying out the main thing which he wished to achieve, that is, to relate the historical truth about the acuteness of the situation developing around Moscow and the degree of danger hanging over it. Not to describe this with complete certainty would mean for him not to relate the strength of that turning point in the war which occurred at Moscow.

The need to tell the most complete historical truth about the Moscow Battle was for Zhukov internally a direct continuation of that undertaking which he had commenced during the Battle of Moscow itself. In a certain sense for him this was a continuation of the war and how he described it forced me to rethink how he fought.

At present, as I am writing these notes, it has been almost 6 months since I have last seen Zhukov. On that evening in one of the Moscow houses, people, chiefly military and no longer young, had assembled to celebrate a major date in the life and military activities of the home's owner.

Zhukov was among those invited and who were present for the meeting. His invitation, on that day and at that house as well as his arrival were of particular significance. It had so happened that Zhukov and the owner of the house for many years had been separated by circumstances of a dramatic nature for them both and for each in his own way. If one were to look back further, to the war, life happened to bring them together in a rather dramatic situation. However, with all of this in the people's memory of the war, their two names most frequently stood side by side than any others and this was the most important thing and all else was secondary.

And when at the party which I recall, after a brief and profoundly respectful speech by Zhukov directed to the master of the house, both these men embraced, certainly for the first time in many years, in our eyes the main thing had again become the main thing and the secondary was the secondary with such obviousness that one could not help but rejoice.

Later on at the same party one of those present, feeling that he had to perform what was clearly an excessive part for him, suddenly gave an endless speech of a pedantic sort.

In endeavoring to emphasize his involvement in the military profession, he began to explain what a military leader was, what was his role in a war and, in particular, what commanders of fronts should and should not do in a war. In a general manner his ideas came down to the fact that the valor of a front's commander consists in troop command and not in risking his life and crawling along the forward edge on his belly which he should not and does not have the right to do.

The orator repeated his favorite and generally common-sense idea for a long time, from various approaches but each time in a categorical form. From the height of his official position, he was teaching the former front commanders seated at the table what they would need for themselves then, in a war.

The table was festive and the speaker was a guest at this table. In his infinitely long speech he clearly intended to give a toast to the host. For this reason he was not interrupted and, as often happens in such awkward situations, they fell silent studying their plates. But somewhere almost at the end of the speech, at his next mention of crawling on his belly, Zhukov could no longer restrain himself.

"But I, as a commander of the front," he said slowly and loudly, "repeatedly crawled on my belly when the situation so required and particularly when before an offensive of our front in the interests of my job I wanted to get a personal notion of the enemy's forward edge in the sector of a future breakthrough."

"So there, I admit, the point was I crawled!" he repeated and shrugged his shoulders, as if ironically admitting to the speaker that he, Zhukov, alas, had acted then contrary to these table-top instructions. He said this and then glanced back at his plate amid the general silence, incidentally, broken by the same speaker who now shifted to a different topic.

I myself do not know why I so remember this minor fact in the conduct of Zhukov that evening. Probably because in his angry irony there was something profoundly soldierly, practical and inexorably hostile to any verbosity about war and particularly the verbosity of persons that unjustifiably consider themselves to be military.
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General Remembers Battle of Berlin
18010005f Moscow VOYENNO-ISTORICHESKIY
ZHURNAL in Russian No 7, Jul 87 (signed to press
23 Jun 87) pp 70-75

[Article, published under the heading "Veterans Recall," by Maj Gen (Ret) V.S. Antonov, Hero of the Soviet Union: "The Last Days of the War"]

[Text] [Editorial Introduction] In June of this year, the party and public organizations in the city of Ivanovo held a meeting for workers with the veterans of the 5th

Assault Army devoted to the 45th anniversary of the army's constituting on the territory of Ivanovo Oblast. The army received its baptism in fire at Stalingrad in the autumn of 1942, it fought its way across the Ukraine, Moldavia and Poland and ended its glorious campaign by the storming of Berlin.

The meeting with the city and oblast workers was attended by about 500 army veterans. Those present listened with attention to the speech by the chairman of the Presidium of the Veterans Council of the 5th Assault Army, the former commander of the 301st Order of Suvorov 2d Degree Donets Rifle Division, Hero of the Soviet Union, Maj Gen (Ret) V.S. Antonov.

[Text of article] Our 301st Division, overcoming fierce enemy resistance, was fighting its way toward the capital of Nazi Germany. On 22 April, in the second half of the day, the forward battalions initiated fighting for the Berlin suburb of Karlsorst. The assaults were broken off with the onset of darkness.

On the next morning the commander of the 5th Assault Army, Col Gen N.E. Berzarin, arrived at the division's command post.

"Although it is in the haze, it is nearby," he said in passing, pointing toward Berlin. And immediately he focused attention on the affairs of the division:

"Now let us hear from Col Antonov."

I reported to the commander on the situation and the plan of forthcoming actions. Having approved it, he ordered:

"The enemy must be crushed in Karlsorst and then the Spree must be crossed. Assault at 1300 hours!"

At 1250 hours a storm of shells was unleashed against the enemy. Attack planes in flights and individually dove at the designated targets. Several Messerschmitts appeared and they were met by our fighters. An air battle broke out. It was also "hot" on the ground. From the division's command post through binoculars one could see the tanks carrying submachine gunners breaking into Karlsorst. An hour later our command post was already set up at the railroad station of this suburb and I reported by telephone to Gen Berzarin on the carrying out of the set mission.(1)

"I see. Well now I am waiting for a report from Trep-towpark!" replied the army commander. I went up to the roof of the station. Here one had a good view of the field as far as the Spree River.

The fighting continued. The enemy was unable to put up organized resistance to the thrust of the Soviet soldiers. Having assessed the situation, I ordered the commander of the 220th Tank Brigade, Col D.S. Narutskiy, to bring all the tanks to the eastern bank of the Spree and the

division's artillery commander, Col N.F. Kazantsev, was ordered to send the cannon battalions of the 823d Artillery Regiment there. I gave the tank troops and artillery men the common task of destroying the enemy firing positions on the west bank of the Spree by direct laying.

The approaching tanks opened fire against the enemy. Some time later they were joined by the cannons of the artillery regiment. The infantrymen began to push boats toward the water. Soon thereafter the first assault troops were on the west bank and began to quickly move into the Plenterwald Park.

At dusk a brigade of riverboats from the Red Banner Dnieper Flotilla arrived on motor vehicles. The boats were quickly unloaded and began to ferry the rifle battalions across the water obstacle. Then a pontoon bridge regiment drove up. In the interior of the park, the enemy was putting up organized resistance. In a brief but fierce fight it was defeated. The division took up a line on the western edge of the Plenterwald Park.(2)

In the morning of 24 April, the enemy went over to a counterattack. From the observation post one could see the extended lines of black figures and tanks moving from the suburb of Treptow against the division's battle formations. A particularly difficult situation arose on the division's left flank, in the 1052d Rifle Regiment. The enemy tanks were breaking through from the direction of Baumschulenweg toward the levee on the western bank of the Spree. There was also a threat to the crossing and the bridges. There was no time to delay and for this reason I ordered the 92d Heavy Tank Regiment of Col I.A. Myasnikov to immediately enter battle. Over a period of 3 hours the SS troops rose to the assault and each time were driven back, strewing the ground with corpses in black uniforms. The Panthers and Ferdinands were burning....

At midday the division's regiments again went over to the offensive. Having crushed the opposing enemy, they completely captured Treptow Park and by dusk had reached the ring railroad. The morning of 25 April arrived. The forward command post of the division was located on the western edge of the park. At the designated time, the artillery and mortars hit the railroad embankment where enemy firing points were located. After brief but heavy artillery softening up, the rifle regiments rose to the assault and broke the Nazi defenses along the city perimeter.

Intense fighting continued the entire following day.

On 27 April, regardless of the fierce enemy resistance, our division had taken Belle Alliansseplatz and the Anhalt Terminal.(3) By the morning of 28 April, the rifle divisions of the 8th Guards Army had violated the

demarcation line between them and the 5th Assault Army along the Landwehrkanal, they crossed it and came out on Belle Alliansseplatz in the flank and rear of the 5th Assault Army.

I ordered the commander of the reconnaissance platoon to block all the street intersections so as to prevent the intermingling of the division's battle formations with the units of the 8th Guards Army and reported on the situation to the commander of the IX Rifle Corps, Hero of the Soviet Union, Lt Gen I.P. Roslyy. Some 10-15 minutes later, he arrived in the division. In a jeep we immediately set off to Belle Alliansseplatz. Ivan Pavlovich [Roslyy], always calm, this time seemed somewhat alarmed. Having reflected on the developing situation, he said:

"Vladimir Semenovich [Antonov], should we really move back across the Landwehrkanal?... Don't allow the mixing of your division's battle formations with the guardsmen and continue the offensive along Wilhelmstrasse and Saarlandstrasse, we will storm the Gestapo, the Air Ministry and the Imperial Chancellery...."

On dawn of 29 April, the division's regiments, in carrying out the order of the corps commander, conducted an offensive in the center of Berlin, in the Citadel Sector. The 1054th Rifle Regiment swung its front to the north and began advancing along Wilhelmstrasse; the 1052d Rifle Regiment together with the 1050th Regiment began to storm the block occupied by the Gestapo and surrounded by a tall stone wall.(4)

This was a mighty strongpoint. For destroying the thick walls our division was given a battery from the 331st Artillery Battalion of the RGK [High Command Reserve] under the command of Maj K.I. Badayev. The heavy shells of the 203-mm howitzers firing with direct laying opened great breaches in the Gestapo walls. Through them the battalion of Capt M.V. Davydov broke into the interior court and behind them the battalion of Capt S.K. Nurmagombetov. By the end of 29 April, a red flag had been hoisted over the Gestapo building.

In the morning of 30 April, the army staff received the battle order of the front's staff:

"The commander of the front orders:

"As of 0100 hours on 30 April 45, to establish a new demarcation line in Berlin between the 5th Army and the 8th Guards Army: Alliansseplatz, Saarlandstrasse, Bellevuestrasse, Siegesallee (all for the 8th Guards Army exclusively). The army infantry and tanks are to pull back to their zone and no further mixing of the units is to be permitted."(5)

Col Gen N.E. Berzarin appended a resolution to this battle order: "Chief of Staff. Give new boundary to IX Rifle Corps."

Now our division had become the left flank of the corps and the army. The 1054th Rifle Regiment, in advancing along Wilhelmstrasse, in cooperation with a regiment from the 248th Rifle Division, attacked a block where the post office building was located. The first to break in there was the division's reconnaissance company headed by Sr Lt V. Boin. MSgt N. Sharov with the scouts I. Dargiyev, V. Kuliayev, F. Bondarenko and Ye. Rusov by fire and bayonet broke through to the roof and erected the red banner. The 1052d and 1050th Rifle Regiments stormed the building of the Air Ministry. Shells of the 203-mm howitzers created large openings in the walls. Through one of these MSgt P. Pritulyak with his platoon was the first into the courtyard and then into the building. Fierce clashes on the floors of Gehring's Citadel continued for 4 hours. The 1050th Regiment, having captured the building of the Air Ministry, by 1200 hours came out on Fossestrasse and began firing on the Imperial Chancellery.

Suddenly the commander of the 1050th Regiment, Lt Col I.I. Gumerov, announced that enemy truce negotiators had arrived in his unit. The division's chief of staff Col M.I. Safonov and I left for the regiment's command post. The truce negotiators introduced themselves:

"Aide of Doctor Goebbels, Wolf Heinersdorff.

"Lt Col Seifert."

Then Lt Col Seifert stated that they did not have any written authority and intended to conduct talks only about a truce to receive Gen Krebs by the Soviet High Command.

I reported to the corps commander on the arrival of the truce negotiators and on the information gained from them. He ordered us to await further instructions. Some 30 minutes later, Gen I.P. Roslyy telephoned the orders of Gen Berzarin: To send the truce negotiators back and resume fighting. The corps commander added that the army commander viewed the appearance of the truce negotiators as a provocation designed to draw out combat.

I informed the truce negotiators that if the troops were not ordered to unconditionally cease resistance and surrender, then we would continue the offensive.

The division resumed fighting. The regiments completely took the block with the building of the post office and Air Ministry. However, SS troops were hidden in the basements and on the roofs and they impeded the advance of the rifle battalions. The 1052d Regiment and the 337th Separate Self-Propelled Artillery Battalion were ordered to destroy them.

In the meanwhile, ever-fewer days remained until victory. May had come.... The commander of the 5th Assault Army, Col Gen N.E. Berzarin, to a question from the correspondent of the newspaper KRASNAYA ZVEZDA

of how the troops would celebrate May Day in battle, related that the division of Gen S.M. Fomichenko had captured the building of the Berlin Rathaus while the 1050th Rifle Regiment of Lt Col I.I. Gumerov and the 1054th Rifle Regiment of Col N.N. Radayev were next to the garden and building of the Imperial Chancellery.(6)

During the night of 1 May, a lull occurred. We learned that talks had begun between Col Gen V.D. Sokolovskiy and the German Gen Krebs. The regiments of the 301st Rifle Division carried out a regrouping and ammunition was brought up. The guns and tanks moved to new firing positions and to the right of us, on Unter den Linden and in the area of the Reichstag, there was frequent small-arms fire and the exploding of shells.

At 1000 hours, Gen I.P. Roslyy telephoned, he congratulated us on the holiday and stated that at 0700 hours, the 2d Guards Tank Army together with the Tadeusz Kosciuszko 1st Infantry Division of the Polish Army, after heavy artillery shelling, had begun moving up along the Charlottenburgerstrasse toward the Brandenburg Gate toward our corps.

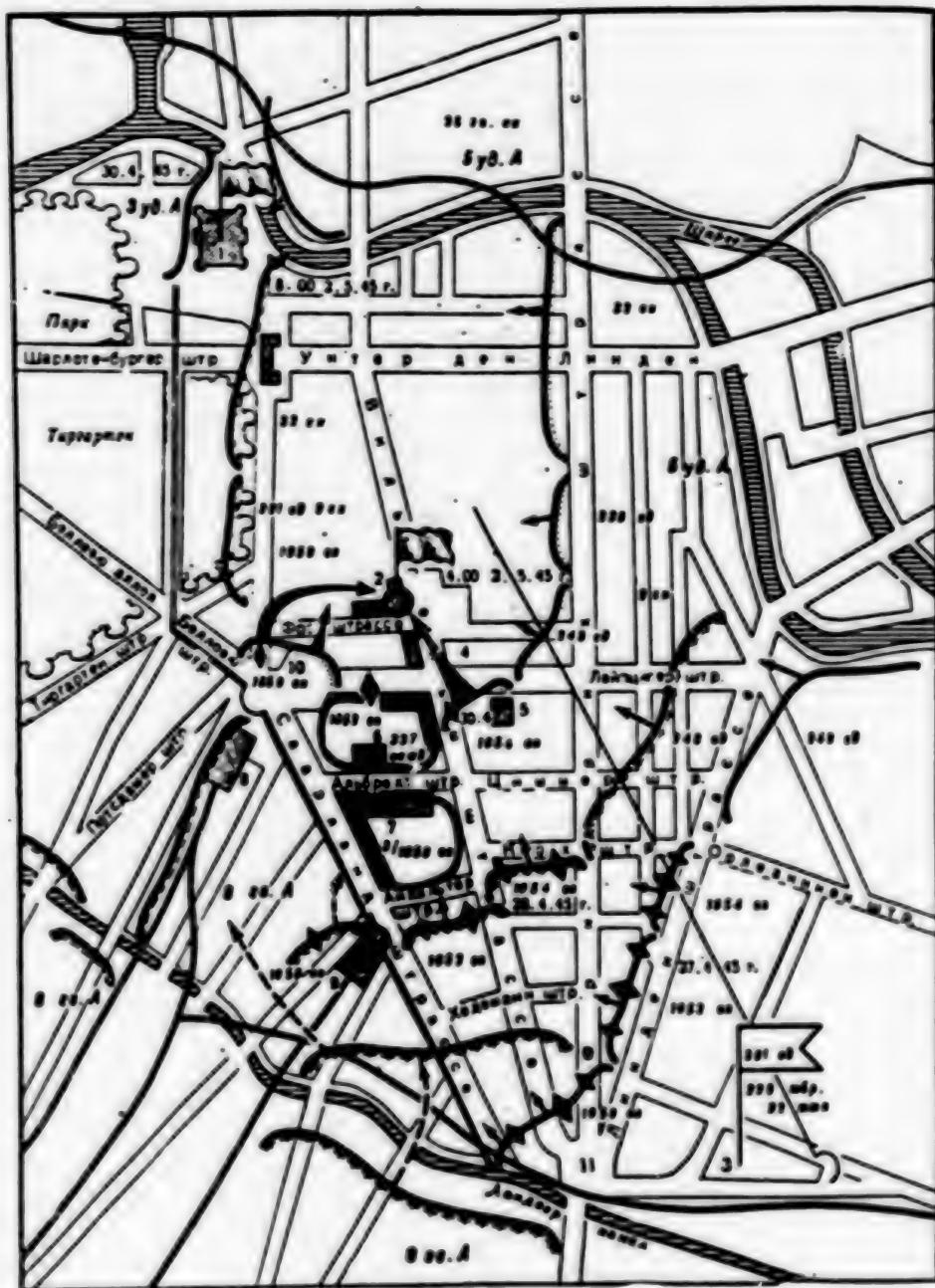
In the evening the division's regiments continued the offensive. The 1054th Regiment was advancing along Wilhelmstrasse while a portion of the forces was fighting inside the building of the Finance Ministry. The rifle battalions of G.M. Ayrepetyan and A.D. Perepelitsyn, with support of a heavy artillery battery, in shattering enemy resistance, was continuing to move forward to the Imperial Chancellery. In the meanwhile, the companies of Sr Lts Ye.P. Galkin and N.Ya. Lazukin on the upper floor of the building of the Finance Ministry had caught the Nazis. The right flank of the regiment was cooperating with the shock groups of the 248th Rifle Division which was also involved in the fighting for the Imperial Chancellery.

The rifle battalions of Capts M.V. Davydov and F.K. Shapovalov of the 1050th Regiment, disregarding the fire of the SS troops, broke into the garden of the Imperial Chancellery. The Nazis rushed into a counter-attack. Stubborn fire and hand-to-hand combat broke out. The machine gun company of the 2d Rifle Battalion under the command of Sr Lt S.I. Vazhdayev greeted the attacking Nazis with dense fire.

I reported to Gen I.P. Roslyy that the regiment of Lt Col I.I. Gumerov had broken into the garden of the Imperial Chancellery and was storming the building. The corps commander replied:

"The sooner you take this nest of serpents, the better."(7)

At midnight, Lt Col I.I. Gumerov reported that in the garden of the Imperial Chancellery, "something unimaginable is occurring;" our submachine gunners were firing point-blank at the Nazis and throwing grenades, but they kept on coming; there everything was confused, the rifle



Combat Actions of Soviet Troops in Berlin

Key to figures on map:

1--Reichstag

2--Imperial Chancellery

3--Patent Office

4--Ministry of Finances

5--State Post Office

6--Air Force Ministry

7--Gestapo

8--Potsdam Terminal

9--Anhalt Terminal

10--Leizigerplatz

11--Belle Allianteplatz

company commanders, Capts V. Sosnovskiy and A. Zotov from the battalion of Capt M. Davydov, with their heroes were destroying the Nazis.

The battalion of Capt F. Shapovalov was fighting near the pool. The 4th Rifle Company under the command of Sr Lt P. Kosenko and the 5th Rifle Company of Capt A. Khramov were right close to the walls of the Imperial Chancellery. Antitank grenades flew through the openings of windows and doors.

The men from the platoons of Lt V. Fedorov and Jr Lt V. Poleshchuk broke through the chancellery doors. Following them was the reconnaissance platoon from the 1050th Rifle Regiment under the command of MSgt V. Tsibulevskiy.

Then breaking into the building was the battalion Komsomol organizer Lt S. Alimov and the instructor from the political section of the IX Rifle Corps, Maj A. Nikulina. Having destroyed the Nazis, the soldiers from the companies of P. Kosenko and A. Khramov cleared out one room after another. Then MSgt V. Tsibulevskiy with a group of his scouts climbed up to the roof over the destroyed stairways, making their way then to the roof where they fastened a red flag.

At the divisional command post the radio operator Sgt V. Kurin summoned me to the radio and handed me the earphones. I heard the Nazis broadcasting in Russian: "We are sending our truce negotiators to the Bismarckstrasse Bridge. We are halting military actions."

I noticed the time. It was around 0200 hours on 2 May. However the fighting was not yet over. The battalion of Capt F. Shapovalov in the courtyard of the Imperial Chancellery had made its way to an enormous pillbox with machine gun slits. None of us at that time knew that this was the last refuge of Hitler, the so-called Führerbunker. The machine guns from the company of S. Vazhdayev hit the firing slits. Machine gun bursts answered back. The crew of Sgt N.K. Timoshchenko on their hands pushed a 45-caliber gun through an opening in the wall. The artillery troops turned the gun and fired point-blank at the firing slits. One after another the enemy machine guns fell silent. The infantrymen broke into the concrete bunker....

Fighting was also going on in the battalions of the 1054th Rifle Regiment. The advancing troops were supported by the artillerymen of Maj K. Badayev. In the final battle, the gun commander, MSgt G. Bocharkov distinguished himself. He and his crew rolled a howitzer onto Wilhelmplatz and hit the main doors of the Imperial Chancellery.

Through openings in the stone wall the battalions of Majs A. Perepelitsyn and G. Ayrapetyan with support from tanks and self-propelled guns completely took Wilhelmplatz. Sometime later the rifle companies of Capt A. Yesin, Capt A. Mayrbekov and Sr Lt N. Lazukin

broke into the building of the Imperial Chancellery. In the corridors, on the stairways and in the officer, brief but fierce clashes broke out. Sgt K. Gorbachev and Pvt F. Bondarev fastened a red flag on the wall of the chancellery main entrance.

MSU G.K. Zhukov subsequently recalled: "The last battle for the Imperial Chancellery which was carried out by the 301st and 248th Rifle Divisions was very difficult. The clash on the approaches to and inside this building was of a particularly fierce nature. The senior instructor from the political section of the IX Rifle Corps, Maj Anna Vladimirovna Nikulina acted with maximum boldness. As part of a shock group from the battalion of F.K. Shapovalov, she broke through an opening in the roof and taking a piece of red cloth from under her jacket, with the aid of a piece of telegraph wire fastened the cloth to the metal pole.(8)

Many years later the historians of the GDR would write: "the shock groups of the 301st Soviet Rifle Division broke into the ruins of the Imperial Chancellery. In the vestibule there was an exchange of fire with the surviving SS security. Civilians and persons dressed in uniform with their hands up came out of the corridors, the underground chambers and passages. This was the end of the Imperial Chancellery ..." (9)

At 0500 hours on 2 May, a liaison officer from the 1050th Rifle Regiment and I headed off to the Imperial Chancellery. We could hear individual shots resounding in the area of the Gestapo and Air Ministry buildings, where, as was later discovered, SS troops were still "dug in."

A cloud of smoke hung over the garden of the Imperial Chancellery. It was hard to breathe. Some trees were burning. Bodies of Nazis were piled up on the ground. The commander of the 1050th Rifle Regiment, Lt Col I.I. Gumerov approached and reported: "the Imperial Chancellery has been taken."

In the offices and corridors of the Imperial Chancellery there was a suffocating smell of powder and burning. In the reception hall, or as it was termed, the hall for receiving ambassadors, on the wall hung the enormous crest of Nazi Germany, a bronze eagle with the Nazi swastika in its claws. I issued instructions to Capt F.K. Shapovalov whose battalion had been assigned to secure the Imperial Chancellery to take down this and all remaining crests. After walking through the rooms, we went out into the garden and approached the Führerbunker. Capt Shapovalov showed us the Adolf Hitler Standard, the baton of Field Mar Rommel and a large-scale map of Berlin lying on a desk in the Führer's office....

In the morning of 2 May, everyone was in a good mood as combat red banners were flying over the Reichstag, the Imperial Chancellery, the Brandenburg Gate and the

Berlin Rathaus. The day started off overcast with a damp rain. But no one noticed the bad weather. I reported on the situation to Lt Gen I.P. Roslyy who had arrived at the Imperial Chancellery.

At noon, there arrived the members of the military council from the 5th Assault Army headed by the commander, Col Gen, Hero of the Soviet Union N.E. Berzarin. They carefully inspected the site of one of the last clashes against Naziism. Explanations were provided by the deputy commander of the 301st Rifle Division, Col V.Ye. Shevtsov, who had been appointed the commandant of the Imperial Chancellery.

On the following day, the Imperial Chancellery was visited by MSU G.K. Zhukov, the Military Council member of the First Belorussian Front, Lt Gen K.F. Telegin, Col Gen N. E. Berzarin, the Army Military Council member Lt Gen F.Ye. Bokov and the officers accompanying them.

The marshal listened closely to my report, he was interested in whether the body of Hitler had been found and then G.K. Zhukov inspected the garden, the Fuhrerbunker and the very building of the Imperial Chancellery. Subsequently he was to write: "...each piece of ground, each stone here clearer than any words witnessed, that on the approaches to the Imperial Chancellery and to the Reichstag and in these very buildings the fight was not for life but to the death." (10)

As the finale to the battle for the capital of the German Reich, on 4 May a parade was held by the Soviet troops of the Berlin Garrison. It was inspected by the Commandant of Berlin, Hero of the Soviet Union, Col Gen N.E. Berzarin. Having fought along the roads of the war from the Volga to the Spree, the battalions of our 301st Order of Suvorov 2d Degree Donets Rifle Division marched in a measured step across the square in front of the Brandenburg Gate.

Footnotes

1. TsAMO SSSR [Central Archives of the USSR Ministry of Defense], folio 301 sd., inv. 492514, file 1, sheet 154; G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya" [Remembrances and Reflections], Moscow, Izd-vo APN, Vol 3, 1986, p 246.

2. TsAMO, folio 9 sk., inv. 24573, file 2, sheets 254, 255; folio 230 sd., inv. 1, file 5, sheet 111; folio 248 sd., Battle Report No 113 of 26 January 1945.

3. Ibid., folio 301 sd., inv. 295514, file 1, sheet 158.

4. Ibid., file 159.

5. Ibid., folio 233, inv. 2356, file 721, sheet 346; folio 333, inv. 4894, file 48, sheets 71, 87.

6. Krasnaya Zvezda, 1 May 1945.

7. I.P. Roslyy, "Posledniy prival v Berline" [The Last Halt in Berlin], Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1983, p 298.

8. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya," Vol 3, pp 259-260.

9. "Konets imperskoy kantselyarii" [The End of the Imperial Chancellery], Publishing House of the Central History Institute of the GDR Academy of Sciences, translated from the German, Berlin, 1976, p 36.

10. G.K. Zhukov, "Vospominaniya i razmyshleniya," Vol 3, p 262.

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Review of 1985 Military Encyclopedic Dictionary
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ZHURNAL in Russian No 7, Jul 87
(signed to press 23 Jun 87) pp 94

[Review, published under the heading "Criticism and Bibliography," by Army Gen G.I. Salmanov of the book "Voyenny entziklopedicheskiy slovar" (Military Encyclopedic Dictionary), 2d Edition, Main Editorial Commission, Chairman MSU S.F. Akhromeyev, Moscow, Voyenizdat, 1986, 863 pages.

[Text] For the development and advancement of military science and military art, a uniform understanding and correct interpretation of military terms and concepts are of exceptionally important significance. For this reason precisely the major scientific research work, the single-volume "Voyenny entziklopedicheskiy slovar" [Military Encyclopedic Dictionary] (VES), which has been recently reissued, is of great value and merits attention both by the servicemen of the Soviet Armed Forces as well as a broad range of readers interested in military affairs.

The dictionary contains around 14,000 entries which briefly in a form accessible to the broad masses of readers take up the most important questions of military, military-political and military history subjects. Many entries are illustrated with maps, diagrams, drawings and photographs. The work examines the urgent problems of war and peace, the military economy and military organizational development, the training and indoctrination of troops and the defense of the socialist fatherland; it explains the decisions of the CPSU and the Soviet government on military questions, analyzes the most important military history events and describes the development and improvement of combat equipment, the rise and trends in the development of military science and military arts (strategy, operational art and tactics). Significant space is given in it to biographic

information on prominent statesmen, Russian, Soviet and foreign generals and military leaders, war heroes, military scientists and the designers of weapons and combat equipment.

In preparing the second edition of the dictionary, the author group has considered the comments and proposals received from readers and has corrected the facts and numerical data using modern Soviet and foreign sources.

The work gives great attention to military political problems. The profoundly informative articles "The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution," "Dialectical Materialism," "Historical Materialism," "The Ideological Struggle," "The Communist Party of the Soviet Union," "Marxism-Leninism," "Marxist-Leninist Teachings About War and Peace," "Marxism and Revolt," "Party Political Work" and "Principles of Military Organizational Development" take up the Marxist-Leninist teachings about war and the army, they disclose the role and importance of V.I. Lenin's military theoretical heritage, the organizational activities of the CPSU in the area of the organizational development of the Soviet Armed Forces as well as political and ideological indoctrination of the Army and Navy personnel. Such entries in the dictionary as "Military Doctrine," "The 1955 Warsaw Pact" and "Disarmament" using persuasive arguments convince one of the peaceableness of the foreign policy of the USSR and the other socialist commonwealth states and describe the constant struggle of the CPSU and the Soviet government to eliminate nuclear weapons and establish peace throughout the world.

The work emphasizes that for checking the aggressive aspirations of imperialism it is essential to constantly increase the economic might of the socialist countries, to strengthen their unshakable unity and constantly raise the combat readiness of the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union and the other Warsaw Pact states.

The U.S. military doctrine has a completely different nature and this is aimed at fanning hostility between peoples, achieving world hegemony, preparing for war against the socialist commonwealth countries and suppressing the revolutionary and national liberation movement in Southwest Asia, Africa and Latin America. The entries "Nuclear Diplomacy," "Aggression of American Imperialism," "Base Strategy," "Arms Race" and "North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)" examine the reactionary, adventurist policy of international and particularly American imperialism, and unmask the U.S. aggressive actions in the wars in Korea and Vietnam, their outright military intervention in Lebanon and Grenada, support for Israel during aggression against the Arab countries as well as the military and financial aid to counterrevolutionary bands in Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Ethiopia.

In concealing themselves behind the false assertion of a "Soviet military threat," the ruling imperialist circles of the United States and the other NATO countries are rapidly building up nuclear missile potential, they are increasing the size of the armed forces, they are organizing one military provocation after another, and are initiating local wars which at any moment could develop into a world war. They have established 1,500 military bases and other military installations on the territories of 40 states and where over 500,000 American military are stationed. In allocating enormous amounts of money for new types and models of weapons of mass destruction, the U.S. Administration headed by President R. Reagan has openly set out to prepare for Star Wars.

The work devotes a good deal of space to military theoretical questions. Numerous articles such as "Assault," "Military Science," "Military Art," "Operational Art," "Combined-Arms Combat," "Fire for Affect," "Military Strategy," "Tactics," "Front Offensive Operation," "Defensive Operation" and others disclose the essence and content of military science, military art and their component parts. They show the close relationship and interdependence of theory and practice of military affairs and provide an analysis of the factors which influence the development of strategy, operational art and tactics.

Of significant interest are the entries on the problems of the organizational development of the armed forces, military legislation, and military service: "Military Obligation," "USSR Armed Forces," "Organizational Development of the Armed Forces" and others. These provide an objective description of the present state and organization of the Soviet Armed Forces as well as the armies and navies of the most developed capitalist countries. They convincingly show how the principles of the organizational development of the Armed Forces depend upon the social and state system and a state's policy. The economic level and degree of development of the productive forces and production relations have had and do have a decisive influence on the state of the armed forces.

The USSR Armed Forces in terms of their purpose differ fundamentally from the armed forces of the capitalist states. Called to defend their country, they embody the moral and political solidarity of Soviet society, socialist patriotism and internationalism. The dictionary discloses the purpose and characteristic traits of the Armed Services and combat arms. Devoted to these are such entries as "Artillery," "Air Forces," "Navy," "Air Defense Troops," "Strategic Rocket Troops," "Ground Troops" and "Tank Troops." Entries such as "Military Academies," "The Division," "The Regiment," "Tank Armies," "Military Schools," "Fleet," "Flotilla," "Front" and others give data on the military formations, military schools and the general structure of the sub-units, units, formations and field forces of the Army and Navy.

Of particular interest are the entries on military history subjects such as: "World War II of 1939-1945," "The Greco-Persian Wars of 500-449 B.C.," "The Grunwald Battle of 1410," "Israeli Aggression Against Arab Countries in 1967," "Cannae," "Kulikovo Battle of 1380," "Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905" and others. In these one can find a brief description of military history events since antiquity to modern days. They acquaint the readers with the developmental history of weapons and combat equipment from the arquebus and ballista to the submachine gun and ballistic missile.

The materials of the work provide an opportunity to objectively fact the process of the preparation and initiation of wars, to analyze the course of the initiating military operations, to examine the directions for the development of the armed forces and military art. The entries disclose the natural relationships of war, the army and military art with the socioeconomic structure of society and show how, under the influence of new weapons, with the change in the social order and other factors, methods and forms of military operations have arisen and developed rapidly.

Among the military history materials a central place is held by those which disclose events of national history. For example, of great value are the entries "The Decembrists," "The Patriotic War of 1812," "The Battle of Poltava of 1709" and "The Defense of Sevastopol of 1854-1855." The dictionary deals extensively with World Wars I and II and the struggle of the peoples of the Soviet Union against aggressors during the years of the Civil War and Great Patriotic War. The work examines great battles and victories which played a decisive role in the defeat of the Nazi invaders (see the entries "Battle of Moscow of 1941-1942," "The Battle of Stalingrad of 1942-1943," "The Battle of Kursk of 1943," "The Battle for Leningrad of 1941-1944," "The Battle for the Caucasus of 1942-1943," "The Battle for the Dnieper of 1943," "The 1944 Belorussian Operation," "The 1945 Vistula-Oder Operation," "The 1945 Berlin Operation" and others).

The materials of the work persuasively show that the Soviet-German Front was the main front of World War II. Here occurred the decisive events, and some 607 German divisions were defeated and taken prisoner while only 176 divisions on the other fronts.

The dictionary gives great attention to unmasking the bourgeois falsifiers of history and to treating such major military-political events as "The 1943 Tehran Conference," "The 1945 Crimean Conference," "The 1945 Potsdam Conference" and others. Much space has been given to entries on the national liberation struggle of peoples during World War II and the postwar period (see "The National Liberation Struggle of the Bulgarian People of 1941-1944," "The National Liberation Struggle of the People of Cambodia of 1945-1979," "The National Liberation Struggle of the Polish People of 1939-1945" and others).

As a whole, the materials on military history subjects in a thorough and complete manner as well as from Marxist-Leninist positions will acquaint the readers with the history of the rise and development of military affairs and with combat experience and disclose the most important trends in the development of military science and art.

The reader will find much that is useful also in the entries devoted to military geography (physicogeographic descriptions of the theaters of operations, the socio-political and economic system of states, population size, state of the road network, preparation of the territory in military terms, as well as information on the military, air force and naval bases of the imperialist powers).

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that the published "Voyenny entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" will undoubtedly be a valuable reference aid on the theory and practice of military affairs for generals, admirals and officers of the Soviet Armed Forces and the armies of the socialist commonwealth countries. Unfortunately, the small run (just 150,000 copies) will obviously not satisfy the demand of the general reader for this essential and useful book.

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